

THE BUFFALO BILL STORIES



The Only Publication authorized by the Hon. W. F. Cody (BUFFALO BILL)

weekly. By Subscription \$2.50 per year. Entered as Second Class Matter at New York Post Office by STREET & SMITH, 238 William St., N. Y.

No. 9

Price, Five Cents.

BUFFALO BILL'S BLACK SCOUTS

OR
THE TRAIL OF THE OUTLAW BAND
OF DEVIL'S DEN



BY
THE AUTHOR OF
"BUFFALO BILL"

THE INDIANS FLED IN WILD PANIC AS BUFFALO BILL AND THE TROOPS CHARGED THEM AT FULL GALLOP.



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BUFFALO BILL'S BLACK SCOUTS;

OR,

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By the author of "BUFFALO BILL."

CHAPTER I.

THE GUARD OF HONOR.

Buffalo Bill, appointed for a special purpose, Chief of Scouts of the Tenth United States Cavalry, a regiment of black troopers, was off on one of his lone and daring trails to reach the command at its frontier post.

He loved the adventure and danger attending his mission, yet sought it also for the benefit he could bring to those who dwelt upon the advance borderland, and depended upon just such men as himself to protect them from the redskins of the Wild West.

The noted scout had been ordered to Fort Aspen for special duty, as the commandant, Major Armes, had made the request that he should be, on account of the threatened hostility of the Indians, and, also, as Buffalo Bill was the man who knew that country better than any other frontiersman.

Major Armes also had been much troubled by the lawless bands of gold hunters who had sought to invade

the Indian country, risking massacre, and keeping the redskins constantly worried over the determination of these palefaces to get a foothold in their hunting grounds and then force them further toward the "Land of the Setting Sun."

Many bands of the lawless invaders of the beautiful Big Horn country had recklessly penetrated the mountain and valley recesses in search of the precious yellow metal, and they had thus avoided the chain of soldiers the Government had put there to keep them out.

One band after another had met its doom in the forbidden land, and been wiped out utterly by the Indians, who had left not one of them to tell the story of the massacre.

They had taken their lives in their own hands, and, against all warnings and efforts of the soldiers, had broken through the military barrier and penetrated the Indian country, to meet there quick death.

Even several emigrant trains, with women and chil-

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dren along, had foolishly ventured, and Buffalo Bill had reported that the groups of whitened bones he had found told the story of their fate.

Though the soldiers were trying to protect their country from invasion, the hostile Sioux were as bitter toward them as toward those who sought to make homes there, and war, merciless and unending, had been declared.

"If I had Buffalo Bill, as my chief of scouts, I believe he could, with his knowledge of the country, of these Indians, and his great skill as a frontiersman, head off these would-be settlers and bands of gold seekers from what they regard as a promised land, and this done, the Sioux would be more willing to make peace with the army, realizing that our desire was to protect them."

So wrote Major Armes, the commandant of Fort Aspen, in seeking to have the general commanding to allow him to have the valuable services of William F. Cody as chief of scouts.

And the letter further said:

"The Tenth Cavalry of Colored Troops also needs just such a man as Buffalo Bill to steady them and give them perfect confidence in the one who leads them upon deadly trails.

"They one and all have perfect confidence in Buffalo Bill, believe that he bears a charmed life—as I also am inclined to believe—and they know that the Indians dread him, regard him with a certain superstitious fear, and his influence is very great along the whole border.

"I therefore respectfully urge that he be sent to Fort Aspen, for a while at least, if only to bring confidence to the garrison."

The result of Major Armes' letter was that the next courier through to Fort Aspen brought dispatches stating that Buffalo Bill should come very soon, and that, spoken to upon the subject, he had said that, instead of making up a scouting band of white scouts, he would pick colored soldiers to be his allies.

In other words, he would have a company of black scouts from the Tenth Cavalry.

Major Armes at once notified the garrison that Buffalo Bill was coming to Fort Aspen, and what his intention was regarding the band of black scouts.

There was excitement at once in the garrison, and the colored troopers were delighted that the great borderman was going to show his confidence in them by taking his scouts from their regiment.

"Now we'll blow de Injuns off de farm."

"You better believe I speaks fer bein' a nigger scout."

"Annudder nigger heah does say de same."

"Wonder if Massa Bill gwine ter brack hisself up so as ter look like us?"

"Won't dem red niggers git up an' lead us brack scouts arter 'em?"

"An' I guesses dem palefaces as wants ter go inter de Promised Lan' will turn back an' settle somewhar else."

Such remarks and others of a like kind ran the rounds of the colored troopers, when they heard the good news that Buffalo Bill was coming, and better still that he intended to pick men from their regiment for his scouts.

Major Armes was much pleased, and, knowing about the time the scout was expected, he ordered a negro servant and twenty men to take the trail as a guard of honor and meet him a day's ride from the fort.

The sergeant and his picked men were as proud as peacocks at the duty and the envy of all the rest of the regiment, who had to remain behind.

Had the colored troopers had their say, all would have gone to meet the scout and Fort Aspen would have been left without a garrison.

And so the black escort set out upon the trail to meet the noted scout.

CHAPTER II.

CORRALED BY INDIANS.

The sergeant in command of the escort was Mobile Buck, and he was so enrolled. He was a fine soldier and a brave one, and had won his rank for his good qualities.

Sergeant Mobile Buck was very cautious, however, and he wisely decided that it would be better to have an advance guard of one man to take chances of an ambush, than to have his whole force in danger, so he kept a trooper well ahead.

What that solitary trooper thought of his being selected for that post of honor will never be known, as his sacrifice saved the sergeant and his other men.

It was when some thirty miles from the fort, and when nearing the time for going into camp, wild yells were heard half a mile ahead, and soon back came the colored trooper's horse riderless.

This and the yells told the story, and the sergeant was quick to take advantage of a retreat to a little hill, rocky and wooded, he had found only a mile back.

He ordered his corporal to retreat there and go into camp, against the advice of several of his men that the safest place to fall back on would be the fort, and in a hurry, too.

But Sergeant Mobile Buck called to two of his men to remain with him, and he set out to discover the troubolor ahead, how many Indians there were, and what he had better do under the circumstances.

He soon discovered more than he cared to, for fully half a hundred Indians were in sight, with no telling how many more were hidden nearby.

Back he rode to the retreating place, fully convince

that the advice offered by a few, to fall back on the fort, was wise.

But he discovered as he came in sight of the hill, that the corporal and his men were in trouble, for there were a number of Indians there also, advancing to the attack.

"That cuts off retreat," said Sergeant Buck, and he charged for the hill with his two companions.

This charge checked the attack of the redskins and greatly pleased Corporal Black, who did not belie his name, as he was as black as charcoal.

The corporal was only too anxious to be relieved of his command, and have the sergeant assume responsibility.

"We are in for it and no mistake, corporal. How many Injuns have you seen?" said the sergeant, as he rode into the retreat.

"Some says dere is hundreds of 'em, but I hain't seen dat many yit, though I has seen more'n I wants ter," was the reply.

"There were about fifty that ambushed Buck, maybe more, and perhaps as many yonder, so we are cut off I ear."

"Did dey kill po' Brick?" asked the corporal.

"I guess they did, for they are Injuns."

"An' scallop him, too?"

"I don't know, for that wasn't easy, as his hair was ut close."

"So hit was, but mine hain't," and the corporal felt af his hair, which he feared was long enough to get a rip on.

The sergeant smiled, then took in the chances of descending the hill, being glad to see that the corporal had put the horses in as secure a place as could be found and posted his men in fighting positions.

The corporal might be scared, but his military training stood him in need.

"Grass, but no water here; yet we can hold 'em off as or a while; for some man has got to slip out to-night and go back to the fort for help," said the sergeant.

All had been listening eagerly to his words; but each tone looked away at this suggestion, fearing he would be the man picked out to go.

"Maybe Massa Bill Cody come along and sabe us," said the corporal.

There was a cheer at this, and it showed just what the colored troopers thought of Buffalo Bill's powers to help them.

The sergeant seemed pleased, also, and he set to work to strengthen his position, place his men where they could do the most good and ordered them to throw up the earth about each one of them so as to protect them. They were only too anxious to do this, and worked like beavers.

"There they come—steady, men, and wait until I order you to fire!" and the sergeant spoke calmly.

The Indians had now united their forces, and it was evident that they belonged to the same band, had been watching the troopers for some time and had arranged to ambush them all, only the advance guard of poor Brick, sent ahead by the sergeant, had spoiled their plan, as they had fired on him with their arrows, believing that the others were close upon his heels.

Having united their two bands, a hundred in number, all came with a rush upon the entrenched troopers, yelling like madmen, their ponies at full speed and sending showers of arrows before them with an occasional shot from a rifle, where a brave was so unfortunate as to have firearms, then not common among the redskins.

"We've got ter do 'em, men, or they'll down us," shouted the sergeant, and a moment after he cried:

"Aim to kill—fire!"

Some of the troopers may have fired at random; but more did not, and down went ponies and riders, while the repeating rifles of the soldiers keeping up their rattle, and deadly rattle it was, checked the onward rush of the redskins, for they wavered, turned and fled for the shelter of the nearest timber.

The colored troopers were jubilant with delight.

Without a white officer they had beaten off the redskins, who were five to one against them, and killed or wounded a number of braves and ponies.

Sergeant Mobile Buck was a hero of heroes, and he felt it, too.

Whatever his men might feel about it, he, at least, was glad he had come.

It gave the sergeant confidence, and it helped the men.

One trooper had been killed, shot through the throat with an arrow, and three others slightly wounded.

But the dead man was removed out of sight, and the wounds of the three men dressed, weapons reloaded, the position strengthened and supper cooked and sent around, for night was at hand.

"I doesn't like dem dead red Injuns lyin' out dere," said a trooper, with an awe of the dead and darkness.

"Never mind, we'll have more of 'em soon," said the sergeant.

Then darkness came and the men waited, each man a sentinel, for there was no sleep for those black defenders of the hill that night.

All was silent and darkness, suddenly broken by the words:

"Who commands here?"

The voice was clear and stern, and came from a point close at hand. Then a tall form arose from behind a group of rocks.

"Massa Buf'ler Bill!"

The cry came almost in a shout, and every man left his position and rushed to where the scout stood, for he it was, in truth, who had invaded the retreat of the corralled negro soldiers.

CHAPTER III.

THE RIDE FOR HELP.

The darkness hid the tears of joy in the eyes of the colored troopers, at the coming of Buffalo Bill.

The scout had crept into the corral unseen, and he said, sternly:

"If I could get in here, redskins can—who is commander here?"

"I ain, sir, Sergeant Mobile Buck, and we were going to meet you, Chief Cody."

"I am glad to meet you, Sergeant Buck; but you have only colored troops?"

"Yes, sir, from the Tenth Cavalry, and Major Armes told us we could come and meet you on the trail, and mighty glad we are to see you, sir."

"I saw your man ahead killed, but could not save him, for he rode right into an ambush I was watching, and his doing so saved me."

"Then I watched developments and saw you retreat here, so waited until dark to creep in, for there are more Indians coming and you are in a bad way."

"Oh, Lordy Lord!"

"Goo' Massa above hab marcy!"

"We is dead coons!"

Other remarks were going the rounds, but Buffalo Bill laughed and said:

"You are not dead yet, boys, and you made a good fight when they attacked you; but you will not be attacked again until morning, about dawn, and then by a force large enough to run you down."

"Jist you take us to de fort, Massa Bill, fer you kin do it, sah," said one, and all held the same opinion.

"No, you could never leave here, and I'll have to sneak out; but my horse and pack animal are a mile away, on the trail to the fort, and I'll go there for help, and it will take three or four troops to do it, too."

"The fort is about twenty-five miles from here, and I'll make it in three hours, for I'll hide my pack animal soon as I can, and I will be back with help in four hours more."

"That will get us here just in time, and you keep watch for all you are worth, strengthen your position all you can, have your rifles and revolvers ready, and you can fight them off, if they do attack, until we get here."

"Don't yer think I better go wid yer, Massa Bill?" asked a trooper, who preferred to take his chances with

Buffalo Bill alone to remaining with his score of comrades.

"No, every man is wanted here."

"Dat's so, an' I wishes you was goin' ter stay, to sah," and this remark voiced the idea of all.

"Now, sergeant, send your men back to their post and let them know if they go to sleep some of the may wake up in the Indians' happy hunting grounds."

"Then Sergeant Buck go with me to the end of timber for I wish a word with you."

The troopers were sent again to their posts of duty and the sergeant went with Buffalo Bill to a gully, which he intended to retreat, for it was not guarded horses could not go that way.

"Sergeant, you have done well in your fight, and appreciate your having come to meet me."

"It saved me, and tell your men I want each one them in my band of scouts, so I have got my eye up them."

"You may have to fight again, but do it to the dea as I'll get help to you as soon as I can."

"Good-night, and luck," and Buffalo Bill grasped the hand of the brave negro who replied:

"We'll die game, sir, if we have to; but we depend on you, Massa Bill, for you is the only man who can save us, and you will, sir, I know you will."

The deep voice quivered, and Buffalo Bill turned away going rapidly down the gully to where he had left his horses.

He passed within a dozen feet of an Indian outpost, several braves heard them talking, and the smoke from their pipes reached him, while he saw a spark of fire.

But he went on, reached his horses, mounted and rode off at a sweeping gallop toward the fort.

At length he halted and muttered:

"It is taking big chances, but I will do it."

"I can hide my pack horse there and it will cut off a dozen miles, if I do risk the lives of my horse and myself in making the leap, which is all of twenty feet."

He turned off the trail, just as the moon, on the wane, rose to light his way.

A roar came to his ears, of falling water, and he stopped on the banks of a foaming stream.

"My pack horse will be safe here," and he quickly unsaddled the animal.

Then he stripped his own horse of his heavy Mexican saddle, laid with it his rifle and belt of arms, save his revolver, took off his boots, hunting coat and broad brimmed sombrero, and approached the steep bank of the river.

It was a cliff, and all of twenty feet down to the water.

A quarter of a mile below was a fall over which

stream wildly rushed, and across from him a hundred yards or more lay the other shore, the banks low and sandy.

"It will save a dozen miles, Buckskin, and we can make it—we must!" he said, in his decided way, and he quickly made a bridle of his stake of rope, leaped across the bare back of his splendid horse, wheeled suddenly and rode rapidly toward the cliff.

"Now, Bucskin, make the leap, and by it save the lives of my Black Troopers!" cried Buffalo Bill, as he urged his horse directly out upon the mad leap.

Buckskin did not hesitate; he seemed to feel, with his master, by the leap from the dizzy height alone, could he save the lives of human beings by cutting off a dozen miles in the trail and getting help from the fort to them before they would be wiped out by the Indians.

The noble horse leaped far out from the cliff, hung in the air, it seemed, for one precious second, and then went down swiftly into the raging flood.

He struck hard, sank from sight, though Buffalo Bill held his revolver far above his head to prevent its getting wet, for those were not the days of the present improved cartridges.

Then the horse arose, and his rider guided him toward the other shore.

It was a wild current, and they were swept rapidly down toward the falls; but the horse swam with vigor, and stripped of his saddle and trappings he was not hampered, Buffalo Bill helping him with all his power.

At length, the shore was reached, the hoofs touched bottom, and Buffalo Bill dismounted to give the horse a rest.

But only for a minute, for, remounting, he set off at a sweeping gallop for the fort, from that point not half a dozen miles.

"I have saved all of an hour and a half, if not more.

"You did it splendidly, Buckskin," said the scout, and coming back into the trail he sent the horse flying along at full speed.

"Within half an hour the light of the fort came into view, and it was not yet midnight.

"Ho, sentinel, let me in—I am Buffalo Bill, the scout—and sound the alarm, for help is needed at once, or

Sergeant Mobile Buck and his men will all be wiped out!"

This startling salute and alarm at once roused the garrison to action, and Buffalo Bill dashed to the headquarters of Major Armes, and reported his coming to the officer and asked for three troops of the Tenth Cavalry to go to the rescue.

"God bless you, Cody, you shall have them, and within ten minutes," cried Major Armes, and the order was given.

Within half an hour, mounted upon a fresh horse, Buffalo Bill rode away from the fort at the head of over a hundred black cavalrymen, to the rescue of Sergeant Buck and his band.

"I'll set the pace, Captain Keyes, and those who cannot keep up can follow.

"We must make it within three hours, sir," said Buffalo Bill, and Captain Edward Keyes answered:

"Go ahead, Cody, and we'll be with you."

CHAPTER IV.

THE BLACK TROOPERS AT BAY.

As Buffalo Bill knew just how urgent the demand for haste might become, he set a pace that, though he knew many of the troopers might not be able to keep up, yet many would do so, and these could make the attack on the Indians, while the others would constantly be coming up as reinforcements.

Major Armes had also promised to send a wagon with rations, a six-pounder gun, and a company of infantry, mounted, as a reserve, in case the Indians should be in still larger force than Buffalo Bill had supposed them to be.

To the Black Troopers in the little hill retreat it was a sad sight to see Buffalo Bill leave them, though they knew that by his going alone was there a chance for their rescue.

They knew their danger, and the warning the scout had given them, that "if he could get into their retreat an Indian could also do so," had made them keep the closest watch, and not an instant did they close their eyes.

"If I wakes up arter a nap, I wants it ter be in this world, not de next, so I doesn't go ter sleep," said a trooper, and he voiced the sentiments of all.

To add to their wakefulness the corporal, in going his rounds, was seen to suddenly fall and lie motionless.

The sergeant hastened to his side to find that an arrow had penetrated his eye—he was dead.

Sergeant Mobile Buck dragged the body into hiding and wisely said nothing.

He then went the rounds of the men himself, and very cautiously, for he knew that Indians were within arrow range and watching.

Then the sergeant discovered how it was that the corporal had lost his life, for the moon was rising, and he had stood with its light behind him, his form in bold relief against its silvery face.

"Be careful of showing yourselves with the moon behind you, for there are Indians watching for a chance to send an arrow at you," said the sergeant, and he was cautious how he moved, for not only did he desire to

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escape what he had warned others of, but he thought also of the men, should he be killed or seriously wounded, and how readily they would get into a panic with no one to govern them.

So the hours passed, the sergeant going on his rounds every half hour, and one time discovering a dark object out upon the open plain, and which he was sure was not there when last he passed that way.

"Give me your gun, Benton," he said to the sentinel nearest the dark object.

The trooper obeyed, and the sergeant took a rest with the carbine over a rock, aimed well and pulled trigger.

A wild yell, a form springing into the air, measuring a few feet, and a heavy fall followed.

"You must keep better watch, Benton, for that redskin would have plugged you in half an hour more," said the sergeant.

Benton was thoroughly alarmed now, and said:

"Yas, sah, you done sabe my life, an' I hain't gwine ter fergit it, nuther."

"You bets I is keepin' watch now, sergeant, I is."

The shot had startled the troopers, as it was answered by yells from the Indians across in the timber.

But the sergeant continued his round, and to each man he told of Benton's narrow escape, until several shots were fired at rocks fearing they might be large groups of Indians.

That a random shot thus fired sounded a death-knell a choking war cry told.

The sergeant had got the rifles of the corporal and of the other trooper slain, and kept them ready for use when the time came.

But he continued his rounds through the night and until the gray of dawn began to appear.

Then he ordered all to be ready, for he felt sure an attack would be made.

That Buffalo Bill had not got back was a cause of deepest anxiety, but the sergeant was brave and told his men that the scout with help was doubtless close at hand, only waiting for the Indians to attack the retreat, and this gave them hope.

Soon a dark mass was visible, moving out from the distant timber.

The Indians were advancing to the attack, and they were mounted.

"Men, we'll empty these extra guns at them first, for they'll reach them, and then you fire only when I give the order," cried the sergeant.

The three guns rattled forth their seven shots each, and they must have hit hard, for the redskins wavered, yelled like demons, and came on with a rush.

"Fire!"

All the rifles opened fire, and the shots told, for ponies fell and riders dropped to the ground.

But the rush was on, the Indians were in heavy force hundreds against a score of Black Troopers, and the showers of arrows, the maddened yells and the roar of the charging ponies, struck terror to the hearts of the troopers.

"Hold 'em, men, or all is lost," shouted the sergeant adding:

"Revolvers now!"

But as the rattle of revolvers began and the redskins were almost up to the retreat, above the wild yells of redskins arose the piercing, thrilling notes of a bugle followed by the ringing war-cry of Buffalo Bill, a stern command from Captain Keyes:

"Ride them down, men!"

The bugle notes broke upon the ears of the redskins just in time to deprive them of their prey, for, wheeling to one side of the retreat, they drove on at full speed for they knew that United States cavalry was upon them and in large force.

"After them, men!" shouted Buffalo Bill, and with Captain Keyes by his side, and nearly a hundred troopers following, they rode hot on the heels of the redskins.

It was a complete surprise, of the kind that causes stampede, and the Indians only sought to escape the pursuers until they reached a place where they could rally and ambush their foes.

But Captain Keyes was too good a soldier to be caught in a trap, with tired-out horses and men, and he called a halt when his command drew near a heavily timbered hill.

"Halt here, men, and let them think this is all raw force, while Cody, you go back, meet the other men on the flank yonder ridge with them, ordering a courier to go to the reserve and fetch them, with the gun, to your men with all speed."

It was almost daylight now, and the tired men remained where they were in line of battle, while Buffalo Bill rode back, checking the troopers still coming up and ordering them to keep out of sight in the timber, while he went to the retreat of those who had been rescued in the nick of time.

CHAPTER V.

BUFFALO BILL'S STRANGE FIND.

"The goo' Lor' bress you, Massa Bill!" came a chorus from a dozen men, as the scout approached the retreat.

Sergeant Mobile Buck came out to meet Buffalo Bill and wrung his hand hard, while he said:

"You did it, sir—you saved us, and just in time, for my men were giving way.

"I lost five killed, sir, and half a dozen wounded, though only two seriously.

"It will do the men good, sir, this fight, and they'll follow you, Mr. Cody, to the devil!"

"And I want you and every man of them for my a squadron of scouts, sergeant, as I will need yourself, a corporal, and twenty-four men.

"Now look to your wounded and then bury your dead, for I'll have breakfast sent to you from the main camp over in the timber yonder, where they are now looking for Captain Keyes and his men, who will remain here they are until I can flank yonder hill, for we have s many more men in reserve and a gun."

"That's good, sir, and Mr. Injun will get it bad, won't he?" said the delighted sergeant, while Buffalo Bill rode through the retreat and called out:

"You had it hot and deadly here, I see, boys, but you fought like wildcats, all of you, and I am proud of my Black Scouts, for I want you all."

A cheer answered the words of the scout, and he rode rapidly back into the timber, where the stragglers had come up with the pack animals, a camp had been formed, and breakfast was being prepared.

Sending a white scout on his trail of the night before to bring his pack horse, saddle and bridle from where he had left them on the river bank, Buffalo Bill hastily had breakfast with a half a hundred troopers, and led them by a flank movement to get in the rear of the Indians on the ridge.

He had long before sent a courier to tell the reserve force, the troopers with their gun, to branch off at a trail, which would head him off at a point where they could reach the rear of the redskins.

All went just as he had hoped it would, the reserve under the command under Buffalo Bill, and by hard riding, were after the Indians, halted on the ridge and watching Captain Keyes in the valley in their front, feeling that he was afraid to attack them, were surprised by a shell bursting in their midst on the hill.

It fairly dazed them with surprise and dread, and only when shell after shell began to crash among them, and Captain Keyes mounted his men for a rush on the ridge, did they break in a wild stampede.

These, too, saw that they were between two fires, Captain Keyes and the force of Buffalo Bill with the gun, and there was but one way to escape, and that was to desert their ponies and take to the deep canyons leading into the mountains where a horse could not find footing.

It was hard for an Indian to do, to leave his pony, but

it was a question of life and death, and they fled on foot, thus making it a glorious victory for the palefaces.

Sending a courier to have his pack animal and a fresh horse brought him, Buffalo Bill went on the trail of the redskins, to see if they continued their flight, or halted to try and make an effort to regain their horses when night came, and Captain Keyes came up with his men to go into camp with the entire force.

It was nearly midnight when Buffalo Bill, on foot, returned to the camp.

"They've got enough for the present, sir, and are all on the jump for their village; but I will go out mounted at dawn and alone, keeping on their trail for a day, at least, until sure what they will do," he said to Captain Keyes.

"And shall I camp here, Cody, or return to the fort?" asked the captain.

"Better rest here until day after to-morrow, sir, and then return by slow march toward the fort, so I can overtake you, if they meet other bands and return, for there may be more of them."

"If I see nothing suspicious, sir, please say to Major Armes that I will return to the fort within two or three days."

"All right, Cody, and I hear you are going to have a squadron of negro scouts?"

"Yes, sir, for it will give the colored troops confidence, and I believe I can make good scouts of them, while the Indians are as scared of the black soldiers as the latter are of them—they don't just understand their being black and call them 'Heap Black Paleface Braves'."

"Not a bad name, either, if they will only prove braves; but the Indians are experts in giving names."

"Now get what rest you can for you need it, and I know of no man who could do what you have."

Ten minutes after Buffalo Bill was fast asleep; but at dawn he woke up, and his pack horse and a fresh riding animal having come up, he had breakfast, mounted and rode away on his lone trail.

That day every sign pointed to the fact that the Indians had been so badly beaten that though they had met a couple of bands of their comrades, they did not turn back, but went on to their villages together.

It was toward evening of his second day's trail, as he came to a good camping place, that Buffalo Bill decided to halt for the night, when he was startled by hearing a human voice calling to him, and the words spoken in a low tone:

"Tank de Lor', massa, you hain't no Injun."

Out of a thicket staggered a tall, gaunt form, with black face, haggard, and showing deep lines of suffering, while his clothing was in rags, his feet wrapped in deer-

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skins, a foxskin cap upon his head, a tattered blanket, and a rifle, revolver and knife his weapons.

He was a pitiable human being to look upon, and Buffalo Bill's heart went out to him in deepest sympathy, as he sat upon his horse gazing upon him in amazement at finding him there in that wild country, appearing before him like a black apparition.

CHAPTER VI.

THE NEGRO MESSENGER.

"Well, my poor fellow, who and what are you?" asked Buffalo Bill, as he dismounted and stood before the tall and vagabond-looking negro.

"I is only a poor nigger man, sah, mighty near starved ter death, an' I'd a died soon ef I hadn't had you find me, boss," was the answer.

"You look it, and I am glad you had me find you, as you say," and Buffalo Bill smiled.

"'Fore Gor', I did, sah, for I seen you comin', and I lay low and was goin' ter let you pass me by, sah, only I seen yer face and know'd yer were a good man.

"If you had been a Injin, sah, or one ob dem bad white men I has seen in dis country, I'd a jist pulled my gun on yer and got yer horse an' rashuns ter eat, fer de Good Book do say dat preservin' o' one's life am de bestest law o' natur', sah."

"So you would have chanced killing me?"

"Yas, sah, and it wud hev been a big chance, too, as I has got but one load in my gun an' one in my revolver."

"Well, I am glad you didn't take the chances; but I would have found you, anyhow, as I intended to camp right here for the night."

"Den I is sabed, sah, I is sabed, fer I gits sometin' to eat, an' sabin' me, sah, means a heap, fer dere is lives dependin' dis werry minit, upon dis nigger, bad lookin' as I is."

"Lives depending upon you?"

"Yis, sah, dere is."

"Where—— But you must be fed first and then you can tell me."

"Sit thbere and I'll soon have a fire and cook supper."

"Boss, I is mos' so weak I has got ter let you do de work, an' you see, sah, I is wounded, too."

"Poor fellow," and Buffalo Bill glanced at a bullet wound in the negro's side.

Hastily the scout set to work, pitched his camp in a secluded spot on the bank of a little stream, and, taking from his pack saddle a pair of extra blankets, he spread them on the ground and told the negro to lie down.

He quickly gathered some wood, built a fire among some rocks, and after staking out the horses, started to

prepare a venison steak, bacon, hoecake and coffee for supper.

The negro would have eaten ravenously, so nearly starved was he, only the scout made him go slow and did not give him half what he craved.

"I'll give you some more after a while; but now I'll build a shelter for you, as I think you'll have to res^D here for a few days, at least."

The shelter was built and made comfortable, and the the scout cut off from the swollen, blistered and bruise feet the deerskin covering that served as shoes, took liniment from his pack, and after having the man stand in the water for some time, put it upon them, after which he dressed the wound in his side, which, though painful, was not serious.

"Who gave you this?"

"A bad white man, sah, I met, and who pretended to be my friend, but arter he heerd my story, he shot me an' he meant ter kill me, only I got one in on him, sah."

"Then I heerd a man call out, an' voices talking, so lit out, thinkin' they must be his frien's, an' I com rapid, sah, thinkin' I cud reach the fort afore I died."

Buffalo Bill was now convinced that the negro had secret of importance to tell, so he gave him another steak, some hoecake and a cup of coffee, and watched him eat it with the look of a half-starved animal.

"I am mighty glad I met you, my man. What is yo name?"

"Black Bill, dey calls me, sah."

"All right, that is one bond between us, for my na is Bill. Did you ever hear of Buffalo Bill?"

"Is I hear ob him, sah? Indeed I has an' dere haill nobody livin' dat hain't."

"Well, I am Buffalo Bill."

The look on the negro's face at this information startled the scout.

"You is de very man I is lookin' fer," exclaimed negro, finally, after he had recovered from his surprise.

"You were looking for me?"

"Yas, sah, for you, fer I knows you is Massa Bill, I does, as he tole me jist how ye looked."

"Who did?"

"De gemman who sent me ter find yer, sah."

"Who was it?"

"Massa John Hill, sali."

"Ah! my old friend John Hill?"

"Dat's him, sah."

"I thought he went East."

"He did went dere, sah, but he done come back."

"Where is he?"

"Whar de debble cudn't fin' him, sah, fer he los."

"Lost! Where?"

"In de Big Horn country, sah, whar I left him an' y'thers. Deres a heap ob 'em, Massa Buf'ler Bill, men, d'wimmens an' chil'en."

"When did they go there?"

"Months ago, sah. Yer see, sah, I ust ter b'long ter Dr. Miner, a gent from de Souf, who hed los' his fortin' ap' de war; but I didn't leab him, sah, an' we was edomin' west ter hunt gold, when we come across a outfit of folks as was also gold huntin', fer Massa John Hill hed met 'em an' tole 'em he know'd whar ter git it."

"So, sah, we all comed along an' he guided us inter de Big Horn country, an' we go down inter a valley an' make home dere."

"But dere was bad men in dat outfit, and four ob 'em one night tuk blastin' powder we fotch' along an' blow up rocks ter stop de only path down a canyon we hed meaduin' inter or out ob dat valley."

"It were beautiful when we got dere, but dere were no way ob gittin' out, sah, fer it were all around wid mountin' cliffs an' a mountin' sheep cudn't git out."

"Yer see, all de gold we hed dug was done by day in' left up in de canyon, de men goin' home to de valley at night."

"Dat's why dem four bad men got dat powder an' blow up dat canyon, an' we cudn't git out."

"Yet you did."

"I has been a sailor man, sah, an' I don't git dizzy, an' I said as how I'd climb dem cliffs, an' I did, by buildin' ladders wid poles I cut, choppin' down a tree ere an' dere, an' arter weeks of work, I got out, an' den fetch up my weepins an' some grub, an' Massa John Hill, he told me ter go ter Fort Fettermore an' fine you, n' tell you he sent fer yer ter come an' save der lives; ut ter tell no one else but you, an' when you come wid our scouts, you was ter bring ropes in plenty, so as ter t 'em out of dat lonesome valley."

"And those four men?"

"Dey over did it, sah, fer dey didn't git a horse, ule or waggin' out ob de valley fust, an' dey hed ter of it wid derne gold, or de gold we all hed got, an' rry it, an' I guesses it were mighty slow work."

"I guesses, sah, dey set off de blow-up business afore y was ready fer all de perversions were in de valley, be what was kept in de cabin on de cliffs fer de men's nner."

"How long have you been on the trail, Black Bill?"

"Bout a month, sah, fer I hed to reckon as how ter an' got los', so my grub gin out, my ammunition, too, I has hed a terribul time, sah, so I is."

"You look it; but you met white men on the way?"

"One, sah, an' heerd others. Dey was gold hunters, u."

"Not the four men who left the valley?"

"No, sah, dat one I seen wasn't."

"This is a strange story you tell me, Black Bill, but I believe you."

"Praise de Lor', sah, fer now you kin sabe 'em all."

"I will try," said Buffalo Bill, firmly.

CHAPTER VII.

TWO SHOTS.

Black Bill would have talked all night, had the scout allowed him to do so; but he checked him again, dressed his wound and feet and gave him a little more to eat, after which he made him go to sleep.

The scout looked to the comfort of his horses and then wrapping his blankets about him laid down to rest.

At dawn Buffalo Bill arose, built a fire, cooked a substantial breakfast, having caught several fine fish from the stream, and then he awoke the negro, who was still sleeping soundly.

Black Bill was then allowed to eat all he wished, and the scout gave him a change of his clothing to put on, looked after his injuries, and said:

"Now, Black Bill, you are not fit even to ride, but you soon will be."

"This is a good camp for you, and you will be comfortable."

"I will leave you my packhorse, make you comfortable, give you plenty of food and ammunition for your weapons, and I'll kill a deer before I go."

"Then you can fish and take it easy."

"Whar is you goin', Massa Buf'ler Bill?"

"To Fort Aspen with all speed, for I shall get there a number of negro scouts I want with me, the ropes John Hill says we will need, pack horses well laden with provisions, and I'll be back here in four days."

"Yas, sah."

"Now, I do not think you will see any Indians here, for they have skipped for their villages, and this camp is on no trail."

"If you should, you must mount my pack horse and get away, for I will leave my compass, and you must keep directly west."

"Yas, sah."

"It might be that the white men may be trailing you; but, if so, you must make your escape, and be on the watch for any danger."

"Yas, sah, I kin do pretty well ter take keer o' myself."

"I don't doubt it."

"In four days you will be well enough to ride, and we'll start for that valley you have told me of and get those people out of their trouble."

Half an hour after Buffalo Bill, having made his bla

comrade thoroughly comfortable, mounted his horse and departed on his trail to the fort.

Black Bill looked after him wistfully as long as he was in sight, but, looking back, the scout saw him wave a farewell, and muttered:

"I am sorry to leave him, yet I must do so, as I can do nothing else, for he could not stand the ride to the fort and back, and lives depend on quick work, if I am not mistaken."

And the scout put his horse at a swift and steady pace.

But he had not ridden many miles, when, suddenly, he saw an Indian bound from the ground and spring to the shelter of a tree, his bow and arrows in hand.

It was a long shot and the scout had to fire quickly, and did so.

It seemed as though there was a double report; but the redskin fell and no others were visible.

He knew that he had killed the Indian and rode toward him, dismounted and bent over the body, when suddenly a human form confronted him and a voice said:

"Pard, I guesses I'll take the scalp o' this Injun, an' as I holds ther drop on you, ye'd better be kinder discreet like."

Buffalo Bill was certainly caught off his guard by the appearance of the stranger upon the scene where he least expected to see a human being, unless a stray Indian.

Yet it was a white man, and certainly an odd-looking one.

He was dressed in rudely tanned buckskin from head to foot, for he wore a cap of that material, ornamented with the tail of a fox for a tassel.

He was a man of large size, muscular build, and looked hard as a pine knot, while his hair was long, unkempt and iron-gray, and his beard, short and grizzly, half hiding a face by no means prepossessing in the features that were visible.

He was armed with an old rifle, a muzzle-loader, a revolver of rather ancient manufacture, a couple of single-barrel pistols and a large bowie knife, while at his back hung a long bow and two quivers of arrows.

The eyes that gazed upon Buffalo Bill with a triumphant leer were vicious, small, and glittered with hate, that seemed their natural expression.

He held his revolver upon Buffalo Bill to cover his heart, and seemed to feel that he was wholly master of the situation.

"Well, who in thunder are you, you old sinner?" demanded Buffalo Bill, seemingly not in the slightest degree taken aback by the sudden appearance of one that seemed to be a foe.

"I are ther Bad Man o' ther Big Horn," was the cool reply.

"The what?" and Bill smiled.

"Ther Bad Man o' ther Big Horn."

"You don't mean it?"

"I does."

"Well, you do look as if you could get away with big horn."

"Look a-hyur, stranger pard, is yer pokin' fun ay me?" angrily asked the man.

"No, you are pokin' that old gun at me," was the cool response.

"Who is you, anyhow?" asked the man, struck with the superb bearing and handsome, fearless face of the scout.

"Sitting Bull," answered Bill, most innocently.

"Does yer take me fer a fool?"

"I knows Sitting Bull, an' he are a screamer fer Injun."

"Like as not you are one of the renegades said to belong to his tribe," was the bold remark of the scout.

"No, but I are friendly with ther Injuns."

"That means you dare not live among your own race, for you look as though you might have been a white man once."

The basilisk eyes of the stranger fairly blazed at this, and his brow grew dark with rage, while he answered quickly:

"Ef I are, yer'll never live ter tell that yer seen me."

"I'll stake that I do. Come, put up your money, or make no threats."

"Wa-al, you is a bold one, and I'd like ter know yer handle."

"The boys in camp call me Buffalo Bill."

Instantly the man's face changed again, growing livid with passion, while he hissed forth:

"You is Bill Cody, is you?"

"When I am at home, that is my name," was the reply, and Bill continued:

"Now tell me your name, for the more I see of your face the more I feel we have met before."

"We has."

"What deviltry were you in when I saw you last, old man?"

"I'll tell yer jist what I were doing then."

"It were a long time ago, and you was a mere boy then, and you was guide fer a train I went ter rob one night, and—"

"You are Ginger Sam, by Jove!" cried Buffalo Bill, recalling the man's face, after nearly twenty years.

"I are."

"I remember you now, you miserable old sinner, and how you and your gang hired as teamsters to the train and intended to massacre all hands one night and get the booty."

"Thet are so; but you overheard two o' ther boys likin', and ther' were hangin' done by ther train people, I'd I'd hev gone ther same way if I hadn't lit out."

"Yer thwarted me then, Bill Cody, and I has heerd yer doin' big things o' late on these hyur borders, I intends ter cut yer days short."

"And I have heard how you played your old tricks of villainy until you could not live in a border settlement, here is where you came to hide your ugly head, is it?"

"Yas, and it are better than hangin'."

"You are a bad citizen, Ginger Sam," said Bill, with a light laugh, although the man still kept him covered with his revolver.

"I are a citizen that shall take in Buf'ler Bill, fer yer is no business in these hyur parts, and hevin' comed apir, I'll see that yer remains, fer I are ther Bad Man lether Big Horn, I told yer."

"Do you see that dead Indian lying there?" asked Bill.

"I does."

"Well, you had better spend your time burying him an in killing me, for it will be more profitable business."

The outlaw was astounded at the cool nerve displayed by Buffalo Bill in his danger, and could not understand his light, bantering tone.

He meant to kill him, there was no doubt; but as a cat will play with a mouse to torture it, he wished to make Buffalo Bill suffer terror and despair, so delayed bring the fatal shot, feeling that he had him wholly at his mercy.

"I kilt that Injun."

"You killed that Indian?" asked Buffalo Bill.

"I said so," responded the Bad Man of the Big Horn.

"Why, I shot him myself," said Buffalo Bill.

"I kilt him."

"Oh, Lord! but what a holy liar you are, Ginger am!"

"Does yer say that you kilt that Injun, Bill Cody?"

"I do."

"I tell yer I were jist leavin' ther timber when I seen het Injun, hevin' got sight o' me, I s'pose."

"So I cracks away, an' I seen him flop over an' then e still; but I lays close, fer I thought t'others mou't be near, an' then I seen you come out o' that timber from his p'int."

"I flanked yer posish, and I has been lookin' at yer, n' now yer says you kilt ther red."

"And I tell you the truth, and I can prove it."

"How kin you?"

"Where did you aim to hit him?"

"In the heart."

"Well, look and see if there are two bullet wounds in his body, for I heard your shot, I remember now, and have no doubt but that you fired at him; but he was dying when you did so."

"Look for the two wounds, Big Horn Bad Man."

The man stooped to do so, and with the bound of a panther Buffalo Bill was upon him.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE BAD MAN OF THE BIG HORN.

Thrown off his guard by the manner of the scout, and his interest in searching for a second wound in the body of the Indian, Ginger Sam went right into the trap which was set for him, and did just what Buffalo Bill had been endeavoring he should do.

Quick as lightning in his movements, Buffalo Bill had sprung forward and seized the hand that held the revolver, before the outlaw could come to an upright position, and at the same time he presented one of his own weapons full in the face of his foe, while he said, in the coolest manner possible:

"If you wish to keep in good health, Ginger Sam, you'll do as I tell you!"

The outlaw was livid with rage, and seemed to feel that his last day on earth had come.

He loved life, even alone in those wilds, and asked, hoarsely:

"Does yer intend ter kill me?"

"I do not know what I shall do with you in the end, but at present I intend to disarm you."

"Drop old Daniel Boone's rifle you hold in your hand there."

"It mou't break it."

"I guess not, for it's too old a settler to be hurt by a little tumble. Drop it, I say."

"It mou't go off an' shoot yer from ther concussion."

"My revolver will go off and shoot you from the muzzle, if you don't obey!"

"Down she goes."

The outlaw dropped it in such a way, at the same time giving it a kick, that showed he would like to have it explode in the fall and kill his captor.

But it did not, and kicking it one side, Bill commanded:

"Now unbuckle your belt and let it fall!"

"Now that would be dangerous."

"Do as I tell you, and be careful not to let your hand touch those blunderbusses you carry, or you won't know what killed you."

The man uttered an oath, but obeyed, and the belt of arms fell to the ground.

"Now step this way."

Bill drew him a few steps away from his rifle and

belt, and then, with a sudden, violent wrench of the wrist, tore the revolver from the outlaw's hand and pitched it over with the other weapons.

"Now, Bad Man of the Big Horn, I was born tired, and don't like work, so take your knife and set to work to build a house under this tree," said Buffalo Bill.

"A house?" asked the surprised man.

"Yes."

"What kind of a house?"

"One that will fit a dead man."

"Yer mean a grave?" asked the outlaw, in a tone of horror.

"I do."

"Yer don't mean ter kill me, and fust make me dig my own grave?" and the voice of the speaker was low and tremulous.

"No, you are not worth burying; but I wish to bury that Injun there, and being lazy, as I told you, I want you to dig his grave."

The outlaw seemed to feel relieved in knowing that he was not the one to occupy the grave, and he at once set to work, and with his knife began to throw out the earth quite rapidly.

Buffalo Bill sat near, coolly watching him, and keeping him covered with his revolver, and noticing the rapid work of the outlaw, he said:

"I guess you were sexton for some graveyard, Ginger Sam, before you took to thieving?"

"Thet are jist what I were, Bill Cody," and the man stopped in his work.

"And you took to robbing by night the people you buried by day, and got caught at it, I guess, so had to dig for the West?"

"Wa-al, you hits things pretty squar', Bill Cody, ter they did plant a leddy in my yard one day, thet were durned fool enough ter leave it in her will thet she were ter be buried in her di'mints, an' t'other jew'ly.

"I know'd ther kin folks wud dig her up some night, ef I didn't, so I did, an' them as was comin' ter do it seen me, an' I jist hed ter light out from them parts."

"Well, you look the ghoul you are, but go on with your work, for life's too short to listen to your sins, old man!"

The ex-sexton resumed his work with a sigh, and soon had an opening which brought from the scout the remark:

"No Injun could wish for more than that, Ginger Sam, and you are the boss grave digger of the Big Horn, whatever your other sins may be."

"Now wrap that Injun in his blanket and lay him in it."

"Won't yer scalp him?"

"No. Come, delay no further, but bury that man, fo I wish to be on my way," said Buffalo Bill.

"Whar goin'?"

"You'll know all in good time."

The man muttered an oath, but obeyed orders, and when the redskin had been buried, Buffalo Bill bound Ginger Sam securely with one end of his lariat, and forced the man to go on his way in the lead.

After gaining a point where the trail led across the river, Buffalo Bill said:

"Cross over, Ginger!"

"What does yer want ter cross fer?" was the surly response.

"I have my reasons, so wade in."

"No; I don't keer ter git wet."

"Very well; take the back trail for the grave you dug; it will hold two," said Bill, indifferently.

The outlaw shuddered, and replied, quickly:

"I'll cross the river."

"Right are you, Sammy, my boy."

Into the water they went, and once on the other shore, where a number of trails divided, Buffalo Bill selected the one that would lead him to the fort.

"Thet trail only goes up inter ther hills," said the outlaw, nervously.

"It is into the hills I wish to go."

"Ther' hain't nothin' up that yer wants."

"There's were you are off your base, Ginger, for there is."

"What does yer want?"

"I desire that you shall take the quickest trail to the fort."

"I'll die fust," was the savage reply.

"You had better do as I ask, for I am not one to palaver."

"I'll not go a step."

"Then I'll lead you there," was the quiet reply.

The outlaw saw that Buffalo Bill was in earnest, and his thoughts flashed like lightning through his brain.

His gaze falling upon the lariat end, held loosely in the hand of Buffalo Bill, his eyes suddenly gleamed with some inborn resolve, and he said, resignedly:

"Wa-al, pard, as I don't know thet I kin kick ag'in yer, I'll do as you say."

"Right, Sammy."

"Now move on!"

The outlaw obeyed, taking the trail once more with nimble step.

At it wound along the edge of a ravine, through the bed of which dashed a stream, the outlaw suddenly sprung over the precipice into the depths below.

Buffalo Bill caught hard at the end of the lariat, as it

ened, but could not hold on, and the end slipped igh his hand, and a plunge following told him that aptive had fallen into the waters below.

CHAPTER IX.

A DOUBLE ESCAPE.

he Bad Man of the Big Horn knew exactly what he doing when he took the seemingly fatal leap over precipice.

e knew the hills and valleys, the trails and canyons, e did his own cabin home, and seeing that Buffalo held the end of the lariat only, with which he was id, and that it was not made fast to the saddle horn round the scout's waist, the idea struck him to npt a bold escape.

e knew the exact point, as the trail led along the of the cliff, where he should jump over, and watch- his chance he did so, as the reader has seen.

was not in the strength of man to check his descent e hold upon the lariat which Buffalo Bill had, and d he have done so, the weight of the man, pulling lenly upon him, would either have dragged him his saddle or drawn his horse over the edge of the ipice.

his Buffalo Bill saw in the twinkling of an eye, and ly let go of the lasso.

is first thought was, of course, that Ginger Sam had mpted suicide and had succeeded.

nt, hardly had the splash of the descending form ied his ears, when he was on foot and peering over precipice.

e saw that the water was swift-running and deep, that the stream wound out of sight a few rods below urning a rocky point.

stantly he decided upon his course, and cast aside arms and outer clothing.

Wait here, and kick the head off anybody you see ing to steal my clothes and arms," he cried to his e, and at once he took the leap.

was thirty feet down to the water, but he struck foremost, and without injury.

the meantime, a perfect swimmer, Ginger Sam w just what was before him, although his arms were d behind his back.

leeping under water until he had rounded the point, ch the current and his own efforts soon enabled him o, he then rose to the surface and began to make for shore.

was hard work, with only his feet to aid his efforts, retarded as he was by his clothing and the lariat, he made it at last, and under the shelter of the overing hill had just sat down to rest, smiling grimly

at his escape, when round the point shot Buffalo Bill swimming with tremendous strokes.

The hunted man uttered a cry of alarm, and springing to his feet, darted away at great speed.

But the scout had always been noted for his fleetness on foot, and he bounded along at a pace that overhauled the outlaw, who was hampered, too, by his bound arms and the dragging lariat.

Seeing that Buffalo Bill was gaining upon him, he finally came to a halt, and sang out lustily:

"I wilts, Pard Bill. Don't shoot me!"

"I have nothing to shoot you with, Sammy, but I've a notion to drown you," answered Bill, as he laid no light hand upon the other's shoulder.

"Don't do it, Bill, for 'twant no fault o' mine.

"Yer see, my foot slipped when I turned round ter speak ter you, an' when I found myself free, I concluded I'd try an' stay so."

"As a scientific liar, Ginger Sam, you are 'way up; but come, you play horse, and I'll drive you back to the top of the cliff over which you accidentally fell. Come, no funny business, but go!"

There was nothing for the outlaw to do but to obey, and he did that promptly, taking a route that soon brought them to where the faithful horse was standing guard most patiently in the spot where his master had left him.

"Who'd a thought ye'd have jumped over thet precipice arter me?" said Ginger Sam, glancing at the place he had leaped from.

"Oh! I was determined to capture you, for I feel that you are too dangerous a man to leave at large.

"Now, I am due at the fort, for I have important work on hand and do not wish to be delayed, so I will tie you to a tree here until my return, or I'll take you to your cabin, for I am sure you have a camp near.

"Which shall it be?"

"I'd be eaten up by b'ar an' sick ef yer tied me to a tree."

"So I fear, and that would keep you from being hanged, so where is your cabin?"

"Hain't got none."

"All right, a tree will do."

"I has got a den."

"Then lead to it, and quick."

The man saw that the scout was in earnest, so said:

"We has got ter climb and leave yer hoss here, so untie my han's fer we goes up thet cliff."

"I'll do it, and if you attempt to run look out for a shot."

"I'm inter it now, so I won't kick."

Buffalo Bill then untied the man's hands, told him to stand on the cliff until he hitched his horse, and as he

turned to do so, quick as a flash the man made the leap again.

Buffalo Bill sprang to the cliff, but did not follow him.

"I have not the time to lose, and I won't shoot him when he comes into view," he muttered.

Soon the man appeared, smiling boldly, and apparently believing Buffalo Bill was in pursuit.

But with his arms free, he felt the chances were that he could get away, as the scout was not armed.

"I'll not shoot you this time, though I could do so—we'll meet again," shouted the scout.

But the outlaw had at once dove deep, when he saw the scout on the cliff, rifle in hand.

Then Buffalo Bill mounted his horse, after hiding Ginger Sam's weapons, and rode rapidly away, for already had he lost too much time. He pushed his horse hard, as he felt he could do so, with the animal to get rest at the fort, and making but short halts he kept on through the night to strike at dawn the camp of Captain Keyes, who had taken up the trail for the fort, going by easy marches with his wounded soldiers and Indians.

A cheer greeted Buffalo Bill as he appeared, and Captain Keyes called out:

"Just in time for breakfast, Cody.

"Any news?"

"Yes, sir, and I'm glad to have met you here, for it saves time," was the scout's answer.

CHAPTER X.

BLACK SCOUTS ON THE TRAIL.

After a hearty breakfast Buffalo Bill confided to Captain Keyes his experience, for he wished to keep the story of finding the negro, Black Bill, a secret from all save the commanding officer.

"Now, captain, I wish to pick my men and go at once on the trail, for, from what that negro tells me, I fear those people are in a bad way.

"I know they have no right in the Big Horn country, but they are there, in great danger, and there are women and children to be rescued.

"Now, Sergeant Mobile Buck I have every confidence in, and I wish a corporal who is an equally good man for the work ahead.

"Then the men with Buck in his corral I feel I can trust, and I wish twenty-six all told, so, if you will pick out the balance to make up the number, I know I will have just the band I can rely on.

"Then, too, sir, I wish to take all the tools you may have along, every lariat, stake line and rope in the outfit, plenty of provisions on pack animals, and the cannon powder, as I may need it for blasting, from what Black Bill tells me.

"Now, Captain Keyes, if you will fit me out all with the men and things I need, it will be a great favor, and we'll be on the return trail within a couple of hours."

"I'll do it, Cody, for what you tell me about the people interests me greatly."

"I know just the men to send with you, and the things to have in the outfit which you can use is at your disposal," said Captain Keyes.

Sergeant Buck was at once called, and Buffalo Bill told him he wished him, a corporal and twenty-four men to take the trail with him, Captain Keyes adding:

"Yes, and we are to pick the men, sergeant, for I know Cody will only take colored soldiers, and they are to be his scouts."

"I'm mighty glad, sir, and I know we can get men, sir," was the answer.

A corporal was first selected, and though he was a pale hue of ink, he rejoiced in the name of Milk White, being generally called "Corporal Milk."

With his aid, and he was a splendid soldier, strong and a giant, and an all round good man, the twenty-four colored scouts were selected, the entire squad of Sergeant Buck's original escort being taken along, save the wounded, for all wished to go with "Massa Buf'ler B."

The scout took along extra rifles for all, carrying the pack animals, every horse was picked for speed and endurance, a large supply of provisions was taken, every rope and lariat in the command, and a big supply of ammunition and cannon powder.

Within two hours, as Buffalo Bill had said, the men of Black Scouts mounted and rode away from the command, all wondering what the reason might be for this strange expedition.

Buffalo Bill rode at the head, the sergeant following with fourteen men, and then came the corporal with ten men as a guard to the pack animals and a reserve force.

Buffalo Bill felt proud of his Black Scouts, and determined to push rapidly on to the lone camp of Black Bill, where a halt for a couple of days' rest was to be made, and to enable the wounded and half starved negroes to recuperate.

Buffalo Bill also intended to take this time to make his own pack animal, which would be fresh, and try to strike the trail of Ginger Sam, who would not be expecting him back from the fort for some days.

He had by no means given up the hope of capturing that gallows bird.

So Buffalo Bill pushed rapidly on with his scouts, and halted only when it was near sunset, for dinner and supper combined, and the men turned in for sleep after midnight.

At a start was made, and, early that afternoon, the camp of Black Bill was reached.

To the sergeant and corporal the scout had told of his meeting upon the starving and wounded negro; but to the men the surprise was very great, upon coming across a lone camp.

Jack Bill greeted the chief of scouts with a shout, saying that he was getting well fast, and he knew he would be ready for the trail at once, if need be.

"No, take a couple of days more, for I do not wish to move until really able to do so."

The chief of scouts did not remain long in camp, but led, mounted on his pack animal, to go to the place where he had left Ginger Sam and try to pick up his trail.

He was confident that the man had a cabin somewhere there, as he had known the cliff trail so well, and leaping from it into the stream he could make a land-and escape.

The scout felt sure that Ginger Sam was in that country, looking for gold, and doubtless allied with the Indians, while again he might have another comrade with him.

He was determined to know and capture the outlaw if he could, to kill him if he had to do so.

He reached the place where the man had landed from the stream, and, to one of his great scouting skill, he dily trailed the tracks of the large and heavy boots, marked as they had been with water.

It soon became a hard trail to follow, but after a mile led into a canyon, and there the scout beheld a small, lone cabin.

The door was closed and the scout slipped up cautiously, to find it tied on the outside.

It was empty, but it was evident that Ginger Sam had been there, for he had changed his wet boots for others. The ashes in the fireplace were cold, and Buffalo Bill needed to grasp the situation, for he said:

"He came here and left without weapons; he has no place but to the Indian village to get more."

"That will take him a week or longer, so I will visit him upon our return, for he doubtless has a gold mine here, so that keeps him alone in these wilds, for none he certainly is."

"He may have struck it rich, and so will I when I kill him, as there are old scores to settle with that man."

Often fastening the door as he found it, and returning where he had left his horse, for he had followed the trail on foot, Buffalo Bill started for the camp of his black Scouts.

All greeted him with a hearty cheer, for they were

anxious about his having gone on a lone expedition, and Black Bill beamed with delight.

The negro courier from the penned-up settlers of the valley had made himself solid with one and all of the Black Scouts, who did all they could to hasten the recovery of his strength.

He had recuperated wonderfully, and was so anxious to start upon the trail of rescue that Buffalo Bill decided to make a start the next afternoon and travel by half-day trails until Black Bill was able to stand what the others could.

So the next day the chief and his scouts started upon the trail of rescue.

CHAPTER XI.

THE BLACK SCOUTS ON THE TRAIL.

Feeling that he was on a trail of rescue, Black Bill rallied so fast that he began to scout on ahead, and one day as Buffalo Bill came near to where the negro lay full length upon the ground, he had reached the summit of a range and was gazing over at something he had discovered on the other side.

Creeping up to the side of the negro, Buffalo Bill peered over cautiously, and he, too, "lay low," and motioned to the coming scouts to come quietly and see the discovery that Black Bill had made.

"Massa Bill, jist look a-yonder, sah, and see what I has found," said the negro, as the chief of scouts dropped at full length by his side and peered over the range.

"You can have them, Black Bill, for I don't want them," answered Buffalo Bill, as he looked in the direction the negro pointed.

The range was a lofty one, steep and rugged, but far down in the valley beyond was the Big Horn River.

The stream wound its way along the valley, its waters shadowed here and there by grand and lofty mountains.

But it was not the discovery of the Big Horn River that riveted the attention of Buffalo Bill, nor the grand scenery.

It was another sight more important than the river, more striking at that time than the scenery.

It was an Indian village.

There it was in the valley, a hundred *tepees*, at least, and with a large herd of ponies feeding near.

It did not look like a permanent village, and the experienced eye of Buffalo Bill now told him that it was not.

It was an Indian village upon the march, and apparently halting there in the valley for rest and game for a few days.

One by one, the black scouts came up and dropped

down at full length by the side of their chief to peer over the range.

They had expected some important discovery, but they saw more than they cared to.

Not a word was spoken other than a low ejaculation of surprise or a whistle at the startling discovery.

A village of a hundred *tepees*.

It might mean nearly a thousand redskins.

It would mean several hundred bucks.

The sight was disheartening.

But they had come to follow the lead of Buffalo Bill.

What would he do?

Every eye was upon him, every ear waiting to catch his words.

But he had taken his field glass from its case and was already surveying the river, the valley, the Indian village through it.

What he was thinking his face did not reveal.

To the ears of the scouts came the sounds of voices.

Children were playing, squaws were scolding, dogs were barking.

All the sounds of an Indian encampment filled the air. Then there was the neighing of Indian ponies.

This turned the gaze of Buffalo Bill upon the herd of horses.

They were beyond the village half a mile.

They were below the village upon the river.

That was the way the scouts were going.

So the chief had an idea and one of daring, and he drew back over the ridge.

The scouts followed his example.

"Black pards, it looks bad, but it is not so bad as it looks."

The men knew that Buffalo Bill saw a chance for them.

"Hain't yer goin' ter skeer 'em, Massa Buf'ler Bill?" asked the guide.

"You mean by playing black ghosts, Black Bill?"

"Yes, sah."

"There's safety in numbers, and I don't think they would scare so much as we would wish them to."

"Jist try it, sah."

"We will try it when a plan I have fails, when we have to do so."

"Yes, sah."

"Night is not very far off, none of the Indians will be coming up here at this hour, and we can follow down the range until we get oppsite to where their ponies are."

"From there we can see where the guards are, and how many, if, indeed, they have any, watching their ponies."

"Then as soon as it is dark we can go down into the

valley, mount some of the best ponies and stampede the whole herd."

The scouts all gave a chuckle of delight.

"We can dash away with them, and keep a-p-t them along."

"Of course, as you know, some of the braves will ponies near their *tepees*, and will follow, but they see us, and, if there are many of them, we can p-re ahead of the herd, if the pace becomes too hot."

"In this way we can get by these redskins w-being seen."

"The Indians will not know what stampeded ponies, and we will leave them to find out the be-they can."

This plan of Buffalo Bill met with the appro-each man, though Black Bill seemed to regret not able to get a chance to "skeer dem red Injuns sill he expressed it.

Down the range, out of sight of the Indian camp-the scouts until Buffalo Bill halted at a spot just where the herd of ponies were feeding.

Finding a hiding-place, the chief swept the with his glass, and soon discovered that there only a couple of youths in charge of the herd, and were seated upon their ponies in the shadow of the along the river bank.

"There are boys in charge, pards, but soon night braves will come to relieve them, we may be so we will be ready to move the moment the sha-deepen in the valley."

"Three of you go to the further end of the her-mount, and we will go to the end near the villa-when you start they'll follow under our driving."

"You take the lead, corporal, and keep the p-going at full speed when they get started."

The men understood the plan, and in half an ho-was dark.

Of course supper was not to be thought of then, while Corporal Milk led the way to the lower end of the herd, Buffalo Bill and those with him rounded up ponies feeding nearest to the Indian village.

Good ponies were caught without trouble, the s-mounted, and with their lariats for bridles began to the herd forward.

The men lay low on the backs of the ponies, so to be seen, and, as the corporal and those with dashed off on the leaders, the other scouts pushing the herd upon them, the two startled Indian boys could get out of the way as the stampeded animals went down the valley.

What stampeded them those two boys could not but their shrill cries gave the alarm, as well as the thunder of hundreds of hoofs.

re were braves in the village who had ponies near
epees, and as soon as they could they dashed off
suit.

the stampeded ponies had over a mile the start
the warriors could get away and that meant a
hard chase unless the ponies stopped of their own
ill.

re were not over a score of braves who had ponies
by and, as they came upon the two boys, the latter
a strange story to tell, of the whole herd raising
heads as one animal, uttering wild snorts and going
though possessed of evil spirits.

down the valley swept the herd, and, as mile after
was gone over, the slow ponies and used up ones
to lag behind.

Corporal Milk and his men led the way, and
lo Bill and those with him kept the pace a hot one,
ig the ponies that could run and endure the strain
on the heels of the leaders.

hind them they knew the warriors were coming
all the speed they could to try and head off the

a stern chase is a long one always, especially
the leaders have a start of over a mile, and several
thus passed before at last the shadowy outlines of
ursuers could be seen.

Ve must push to the lead now, pards, at all hazards.
Ve have to desert our ponies, and, fortunately, we
the timber along the river to hide us," said Buffalo

ponies they rode then were pushed the harder,
they began to pass animal after animal.

e center of the herd was reached, then they forged
er and nearer to the front, the ponies they passed
ng as they went by them, and thus checking the
rapid pursuit of the braves in chase.

last Buffalo Bill saw Corporal Milk's tall form
d, and the next moment the scouts were all bunched
her.

ff to the right here.

All lay low on your own horses now, and no one
aloud, for there are a score of braves pursuing,"
Buffalo Bill.

he word was passed in a low tone from one to the
r, the scouts wheeled to the right, the shadow of
timber along the river was reached, and each man
ped from the back of the animal he rode, pulled off
lariat bridle from his pony and bounded into the
fer of the trees.

ushed with the lariats to urge them on, the group of
es just deserted, though fagged out, ran on down
valley, and suddenly in chase swept half a dozen
es.

"They had gained well on us, but they'll soon head
those ponies off and return up the valley," said Buffalo
Bill.

"It was a successful stampede," remarked the cor-
poral.

"Yes, now to push along for a few miles, as soon as
those braves go back."

This the braves were not long in doing, going back at
a canter and driving the ponies so recently deserted by
riders before them, yet with no thought of the reason of
the wild stampede.

CHAPTER XII.

BLACK BILL'S LONE HAND.

After going a couple of miles the black scouts returned
to Sergeant Buck and his men, and they all pushed on
once more, flanking the Indian village.

They came to a small stream running down from the
mountains, and this the chief followed up until it was
seen to come out of a canyon.

Here was a good camping-place, so a fire was built in
a crevice of the rocks, supper was gotten, and the scouts
turned in for the night, well tired out after their hard
day's work.

Up with the light, they were determined to press on
before having breakfast, and fortunate for them it was,
as they had not gone half a mile, and were just nearing
the mouth of the canyon they had camped in, when
Buffalo Bill, who was well in the advance, was seen to
come to a sudden stop.

The scouts halted also.

They saw their chief step cautiously back into a
thicket, then move to the right and there stand gazing
at what had attracted his attention and halted him so
suddenly.

After a moment he motioned them to approach.

They did so, and gaining a point of observation, be-
held, not a quarter of a mile distant, a band of half a
hundred Indians just going into camp.

They had picketed their ponies, and were gathering
wood with the evident intention of having breakfast
there.

"Those fellows are on a rapid march, and evidently
belong to the village up the river, and are going home.

"I judge they have come from across the Big Horn,
and have struck the trail of their village and now have
halted for rest and food.

"Pards, we cannot get out of this canyon until they
have passed on, for we can't scale those cliffs, not being
birds, and you know this stream tumbles over a precipice
at the head of this trap.

"Corporal, you remain here with me, and we'll se-

what we can discover more about that band, while the rest of you return up the canyon and take it easy."

Buffalo Bill and Corporal Milk then remained in hiding, watching the redskins, while the remainder of the band returned up the canyon, which at its entrance was a quarter of a mile in width, but narrowed to a few feet at its end, and there the creek tumbled over a cliff into a waterfall.

The Indians, the scouts saw, were some three score in number, and their ponies stood with heads lowered as though they had been very hard ridden.

Several fires had been built, and the smell of broiling venison floated up the canyon, while the redskins could be seen gathered about the fire, eating heartily.

There was a thicket near that hid half of their camping place, but Buffalo Bill quickly ran his field glass over the band and at last said:

"Those redskins have been up to some deviltry, I am certain.

"They have no plunder or scalps, but they have not been on a hunt, or they would have their game with them.

"Then, too, there is so much game in this country they would not have to go after it."

"They've been on a war trail near some of the forts, sir, and look as though they had been worsted in a fight," said the corporal.

"Yes, that is about it. Doubtless they have been in the neighborhood of Fetterman, as they came up the right bank of the Big Horn."

"Do you observe any wounded among them, sir?"

"Yes, now I am looking for wounded, I see a number who appear to have been used rather severely in a fight. I see that they appear in no hurry now, having crossed the Big Horn and struck the trail of their village; but their arrival there will cause wailing instead of rejoicing — holy smoke! Look there!"

Buffalo Bill pointed toward the other side of the canyon, where, quietly walking out upon the plain was no less a personage than the giant negro, Black Bill.

He had come out of the canyon, and was walking deliberately down toward the Indian camp, the latter not yet having discovered him.

"Blast that darkey!"

"He will ruin us," cried Corporal Milk, as he looked toward the spot where Buffalo Bill had pointed and discovered Black Bill going deliberately toward the Indian camp.

"He will be killed if we don't save him. Run, corporal, and call the boys," cried Buffalo Bill.

He was about to obey when the sergeant came running up, and not far behind him were the other scouts.

"Do you see that nigger, chief?"

"Yes."

"He's mad or a traitor. He was there with ~~the~~ ^{the} band, and said he could scare the reds to death up

"Then he got up and walked away, and soon ~~we~~ ^{they} discovered that he had gone toward the other ~~end~~ ^{end} of the canyon.

"We followed, and you see what he has done."

"Yes, perhaps he has got us into a hole from ~~there~~ ⁱⁿ is no escape. Stand ready; men, to see what the outcome will be."

The men were all ready for a fight or a race ~~but~~ ^{which} might turn out for them.

Every eye was upon the negro, who was now ~~he~~ ^{off} to recall.

He was walking calmly along, straight toward the Indian camp, and they, strange to say, had not yet ~~seen~~ ^{noticed} him.

They were still broiling venison steak on the ere ~~fire~~ sticks and eating it in a way that showed their ~~bl~~ ^{fire} by no means satiated.

Feeling secure where they were, confident that ~~they~~ ^{they} would not be pursued that far into their country, not knowing that their village could not be over ~~the~~ ^{the} day's journey ahead of them, they were taking it ~~it~~ coolly, to recover from the strain they had ~~been~~ ^{been} under for some time.

Still on the giant negro guide walked, while the could only stand ready for action, watch him an for the finale.

He appeared not in the least disturbed as he ~~he~~ ^{he} toward the Indian camp.

But suddenly there was heard a wild, almost une ~~and~~ ^{and} cry.

It was of terror and ferocity commingled, and ~~it~~ ^{it} echoed by half a hundred throats, while it br ~~the~~ ^{the} every brave to his feet.

There was one glance of wild eyes toward the ~~the~~ ^{the} gigantic in form, black as ink and gliding, rather seeming to walk, toward them, and with yells of ha they sprang for their ponies with an alacrity and ener that said most plainly:

"The devil take the hindmost!"

There was not a moment of hesitation, and their told the story of their stampede and terror, for lou heard in their own tongue:

"The black spirit! The evil spirit of the Big H

Leaping upon their ponies, here and thiere two b upon the back of one horse, leaving their camp ot saddles and all, they started off as fast as they e mount.

They could be seen lashing their ponies furiously looking back in terror, and were all soon spread ~~as~~ ^{as} they sped up the valley.

Black Bill was seen by the amazed and watching start in a run after them. us added to their flight and terror, and the blows upon the worn-out ponies could be distinctly y the wondering scouts.

er scouts could hardly restrain from a cheer, but Bill said: e member, boys, we are scouts of silence on this on w look at the giant black!"'

an Indian was now visible, the last one having a bend in the valley that shut them out of sight. negro, however, still kept on after them.

he, too, turned the bend and disappeared.

Buffalo Bill gave no order to move.

some time they waited, but Black Bill did not cr.

Indian camp remained as they had left it.

ere was a badly wounded redskin there he was rible.

fires still burned, and several Indian ponies were h near, but no human being could be seen.

an exclamation came from several of the scouts err.

guide was returning down the valley, but was yet viaway.

CHAPTER XIII.

BLACK BILL'S PRISONER.

ll, pards, Black Bill has not deserted us, as some feared he had," said Buffalo Bill as the negro was turning at a rapid walk down the valley.

indeed, chief," said the sergeant.

he kept his word about scaring the redskins though he took big chances to do so."

scared them frightful."

dn't think an Injun could get that bad scared."

n't they light out lively."

ey pushed the breeze beautiful up the valley."

hat caused de stampede?"

e nigger."

ere the expressions of the black scouts regarding had really been a most complete stampede of irs.

ck Bill had, indeed, kept his word, for the red had certainly been terribly frightened.

he came on down the valley, the scouts wished to b to meet him, to greet him with a cheer.

ut this Buffalo Bill would not allow.

do not yet know who may have been left in the pards.

lyst wait and see, for when he wants us, he knows o to find us," said the chief.

Upon second thought this was considered the wisest plan, and they kept in their place of concealment and waited.

Down the valley in silence walked the guide, and at last reached the camp.

He disappeared behind the little thicket of pines, then reappeared, and walking near to a grazing pony, slung his lariat.

The animal was cleanly caught and led back to the thicket.

Then some minutes passed away, and once more the negro reappeared.

He was leading the pony, and upon the animal, supported by several saddles and blankets and tied there with lariats, was an Indian brave.

That he was badly wounded the scouts could see at that distance. The head of the pony was checked up, so that he could not feed and then he was led to the trail and started up the valley on the trail of the Indian village and the braves who had stampeded.

Until the pony disappeared from sight around the bend the giant negro stood watching him.

Then he turned back to the deserted camp and disappeared in the thicket.

Still Buffalo Bill did not allow the scouts to show themselves.

After another long wait, the negro reappeared, and, looking toward the canyon, he beckoned several times.

"Now, pard, we'll go."

With this Buffalo Bill led the way, and they walked rapidly toward the Indian camp, Black Bill having returned to the thicket.

When Buffalo Bill and his men reached the camp, they beheld a strange scene.

The redskins had deserted everything.

But that was not all, for they had left the badly wounded Indian Black Bill had sent off and two dead comrades, the latter having evidently just died of their wounds.

And they had left still more, for, lying in the pine thicket was a prisoner.

It was a white man.

He was securely bound, painfully so, and, as the scouts rode up, they saw Black Bill kneeling by his side and unfastening the thongs that were about his hands and feet, which were much swollen.

A glad cry broke from the lips of Buffalo Bill as he advanced toward the prisoner.

It was Don Miller, a gold hunter the scout knew well.

"Ah, Miller, I am glad indeed to see you, and I have found it hard to believe you dead," said the chief, "as I heard you were."

"Only half dead, Mr. Cody; but you have saved me."

"And glad we are to do so."

"All the rest were killed—I am the last of my band of hunters."

"Yes, and the man I would have risked much to save, for I have not forgotten what I owe you, Pard Miller. Scouts, this is my friend, a gold boomer captain, Don Miller."

The men pressed about him and grasped his swollen hands, which Black Bill had released.

Turning to the negro guide, Buffalo Bill said:

"Well, Black Bill, you have kept your word and frightened the redskins into fits, so I know now surely that there is virtue in what you have asserted about black spirits being a terror to the Indians of this Big Horn country."

"Yes, sah, dey runs like de debbil when dey sees a nigger."

"I done tell dis gemman here so."

"But, Massa Bill, we must git out of here right quick, for dem Injuns will come right back after dere prisoner in a short time."

This was decided upon at once, and preparations to start were begun.

"Massa Buf'ler Bill."

"Yes, Black Bill."

"Can I say suthin', sah?"

"All that you wish."

"Yer see, sah, we must not disturb de camp 'ceptin' de gemman and de gold, and as I hab sent off dat wounded Injun he'll tell 'em about me."

"I didn't open my mouth to him, was still as death, but jist took him up, put him on a pony and tied him on all right."

"Then I started him off."

"He think I am de black evil speeret of de Big Horn, and when dey come back dey'll find I has let de prisoner go, and what I hab done wid de gold dey won't care."

"Black Bill, you have got a very level head. It is just what we will do. Come, boys. We must carry Mr. Miller and the gold, too."

"I'll divide the gold, pards, for saving me as you did," said Don Miller.

"If you can find a man in my band who would touch a dollar's worth of it for a service to you I wouldn't have him with me five minutes after I knew it," said Buffalo Bill, somewhat hotly, and the men joined heartily in their chief's opinion.

A quarter of an hour after their arrival in camp the scouts started off, with Buffalo Bill in the lead.

The Indian camp was left just as it was found, with the exception of the gold and the rescued prisoner.

The gold boomer's horse and the ponies were left

grazing near the dead redskins, where they had been placed by their comrades, and there was nothing to reveal that other than the supposed "evil spirit," "ghost," had been there.

The superstitious dread of the Indians all knew, allowed them to believe that the evil spirit had been with them for taking the paleface.

The scouts turned toward the base of the mountain and went along the range.

Mile after mile they held on until a stream was met, flowing out of a canyon, a march of fully five miles had been made, and in a secure spot Buffalo Bill encamped his men.

Then the swollen limbs of the rescued prisoner were bathed, arnica put on them, and a good meal cooked to enjoy, for Buffalo Bill saw that a bend in the river would completely hide the smoke from the Indians of the valley.

It was a good place, too, where the gold could be hidden, for Don Miller proudly said there was not a man in the party but whom he would trust with the secret.

If the people of the valley were found, the Indians would be up the Big Horn to that point, at least, where they were making for Fort Aspen or Fort Fetterman, and the gold could be taken up and carried along a special expedition made for it.

So the gold, in bright, glittering particles, from the size of a pinhead to an acorn, and nuggets as large as hen's egg, were packed more closely and hidden in a crevice in the cliff overhanging the canyon.

The march was not resumed that day, for Buffalo Bill wished to see whether the Indians did follow, if so, that was a splendid place for a stand, if as "black spirits" the scouts could not frighten them off, and consequently a fight on their hands.

The next morning, as not an Indian had been seen, the party took up the march.

Don Miller expressed himself as feeling much better, and said that he would be all right soon.

On his account it was slow traveling, but Buffalo Bill felt that he owed his life to the gold boomer captain, and could not do too much for him, and the men had the same feeling toward him for what he had done for their chief.

Thus another day passed, and Buffalo Bill knew that they had gotten well up toward the Big Horn Mountains, and if the people of the valley lived they could not be very far from where the camp then was.

CHAPTER XIV.

THE LOST VALLEY.

Still another day and another went by, and each brought the scouts further and further into a most beautiful country, yet one that thus far had been most

faces venturing there, lured to risk life and
ships and suffering in search of the yellow
buys men so readily, body and soul.
Bill once owed his life to Don Miller when he
it, and liked the man; but he had given up
and had gone to lawless gold hunting in the
and the report had come that his whole party
massacred; but Cody was only glad that his
escaped.

the next day brought them to a perfect garden
the Big Horn Mountains.

ings were as clear as crystal and as cold as ice,
grand, and the little valleys most inviting for

Bill boldly asserted that the Indians would
be there, that they believed these mountains
of the evil spirits.

were springs there of boiling water, and most
fumes, sending clouds of yellow smoke high
and near these boiling waters no game would
ugh the grasses in the valleys were as soft as
luscious as fruit.

ds made their haunts there, and why should
ians—make their abode where the waters
e burnt powder, were scalding hot and red and

Bill knew in spite of his protestations and
at Don Miller was not yet well, but good food,
bathing in these springs would help him; so he
go regularly into camp there.

eed have no dread of Indians there, and they
o trail to be followed easily.

ould halt there, for the men needed the rest,
id Black Bill would take short searches to try
the Lost Valley and its mysterious people.

times in the last day the giant negro had
I regarded his surroundings in a fixed way.

ed to be trying to recall some feature in the
as though he had seen it before.

een two months and more since he was there
he had passed that way in his wanderings, and
rees were bright green, in midsummer.

ey were changing to autumn tints, and, as is
even, this changed the whole aspect of the

prings the negro had not seen, though there
le from the Lost Valley who had been there.

Bill has been near here before, I feel certain,
Buck, and our plan is to scout about the moun-
we strike some locality familiar to him."

chief, that is just it, sir."

ly City, Wyoming, is near those springs.

"We can all have a rest, and Miller is really not well yet."

"No, sir, and it is not any wonder, when you think
them red devils had his hands tied behind him during
all their retreat, and his legs so tightly bound that the
flesh was cut into."

"Yes; but he will rally quickly here and soon will be
well.

"He is a brave fellow, and a noble-hearted man, if he
did break the law by invading this country as a gold
boomer."

"He is all you say of him, chief, and the boys are
very much attached to him, sir.

"Then, too, sir, he's another strong arm and brave
heart, if we get into trouble, which I now believe we
will not, as Black Bill seems to be a terror the redskins
won't face," said Sergeant Buck.

"But will you pick the camp?"

"Yes."

The spot selected was all that could be wished.

Wickiups were built as a shelter, for the cold nights
were coming on, and the men made themselves most
comfortable right near a large spring.

Leaves furnished good mattresses to spread blankets
upon, the provisions were plentiful, and very little use
had been made of the ammunition, save to kill game.

As there was no game near the spring, it was decided
to send several scouts on a hunt the next day to get
deer, and in the streams the fish were plentiful.

The scouts had realized the virtue of being blacked up
in that country, and Don Miller had transferred himself
also, in appearance at least, to a negro.

Without a guard, the scouts lay down to sleep, and
nothing disturbed their slumbers.

The next morning Corporal Milk took a party hunting
up the valley with him, and Buffalo Bill and Black
Bill began their real search for the Lost Valley.

The hunters were gone all day, and when they re-
turned to the camp at sunset they carried very heavy
loads of game of various kinds.

But the scouts who remained in the camp could give
no reply as to what had become of Buffalo Bill and the
negro.

They had not put in an appearance, and it was cer-
tainly thought that they should have done so.

"Was it any one else than the chief, I would be
anxious," said Sergeant Buck, hopefully; but all could
see that he was anxious, even though it was the chief.

Buffalo Bill had said that they would be back before
night.

He had not returned.

It had been his intention, they knew, to go out each

day with the negro, and in a different direction, to try and come upon some scene Black Bill would recognize.

If he did not do so from that camp, he would move to another, and in that time Don Miller would be as well as any of them, and they would see what discovery could be made.

But here the very first day of the search the chief of the scouts and the giant negro did not return.

What could it mean?

Buffalo Bill was not the man to get lost anywhere.

He could find his way in the darkness right through an unknown country.

It was a talent with him—an instinct—and his men never feared for him, save from an ambush from an enemy or treachery.

There were several of the scouts who still doubted the black guide.

They could not feel the faith in him which their chief did.

In spite of the seeming honesty of the negro, they doubted him.

He was an object of mystery to them—a man to dread.

They could not believe that he had started alone to find aid, to look up Buffalo Bill, and yet could not find his way back to the point from whence he had started.

It looked strange to them.

Now he had gone off alone with the chief of scouts, and they had not returned.

This to some looked like treachery.

The scouts awaited supper for some time, and then ate it, as the chief and the negro did not return.

The meal was, however, not enjoyed by any one.

Bedtime came; and yet what could be done?

No one could go out at night to look for the missing chief and the negro.

If nothing had happened, then Buffalo Bill would find the way to the camp in a mountain storm.

All knew that the scout did not go without his blanket, a haversack of food, and was prepared to spend the night anywhere he might be overtaken.

A search of the traps of the negro showed that he had gone also prepared for a stay if necessary.

At last the scouts decided to retire and put the best face on the non-return of the chief by saying that they had doubtless gone so far, made some discovery, and to carry out their intention had decided to camp where they were for the night, to be on the spot early in the morning, rather than return to camp.

"We will start on the hunt, pards, if they are not here to breakfast," said Sergeant Buck.

Dawn came, but the chief and the negro had not returned.

One of those who appeared to be most anxious the chief was Don Miller.

He wanted to go on the search.

"We will all go, and divide in twos, and if we find their trail we will go the way we think they have gone.

"You take care of the camp, Mr. Miller, and of us, as he gives up the search, will come in; for we do not wish any man to give up until he is certain he cannot find the chief, and must get back here."

"Yes, I want every man back here in camp."

"You will see where we are located, and no one get lost."

"Come right back to camp if any discovery is made, and, I tell you, boys, we must find the chief."

"If he has been treacherously dealt with, as some of you believe, then we know who did it, and we must find him."

"Now, pards, let us be off," said Sergeant Buck.

Such was the sergeant's speech to his command, and they all started on their search.

And in the lone camp Don Miller remained alone, watching them as they disappeared on the various trails, and musing to himself in a very determined manner.

"Buffalo Bill must be found, dead or alive. If he is dead, he shall be avenged!"

CHAPTER XV.

UNSEEN FOES.

When Buffalo Bill and the guide left the camp together, the chief went down the valley leading to the Big Horn mountains, where the camp had been located, hoping to pass some scene that the negro would have sight of.

Could he do this, Buffalo Bill felt little doubt, for he knew that they could in that way find the Lost Valley. The guide had perfect faith that the negro was sincere, as he had said, and that it was not the result of mind diseased.

Brave as he was, good plainsman, also, it was readily understood by Buffalo Bill how the negro could be led to find a given locality when he had been guided by some one else, and had simply left there to go to find his way to a place where he could get him, the chief of scouts, who was to be secreted to come to the rescue of people in distress.

Why some one else—the guide of the party, for instance—had not been sent on this mission is not known, but it is known that Buffalo Bill had been unable to find out from Black Bill.

Starting out alone with Black Bill, and the negro, as it were, almost upon the scene to which the negro had wished to bring him, Buffalo Bill

ps, he would tell him more than he thus far
and to encourage him to do so, he had said:
you think we are near the Lost Valley?"
sah; very sartin."

do you tell by?"
sah, dere is trees, and mountains and valleys
familiar-like, though I can't jist place 'em;
jirtin I has seen 'em before."

but ever go far from the valley?"
erry, sah; but I hunted 'round, maybe ten and
iles away."

se you find some spot that you recall thor-
ill you go right to the valley?"

Massa Bill, I'll go as near as I kin, and then
ide what is ter be done."

ight; keep your eyes open, and see if you can
ace you remember to have seen before."

Hi; I'm a lookin' hard, sah."

rint on together for some miles, and the valley
following opened into a larger one.

ed came out into the larger valley, the guide
n denly, rubbed his eyes, looked about him, and
listly:

Buf'ler Bill, I knows whar I is."
re sure?"

been in dis valley before, sah."

kilt game here, sah."
elieve you can find your way from here to the
ey?"

sah."
do you recognize about this valley?"

right, sah, you see dem cliffs 'way yonder?"

over de canyon where dey used ter git gold."
ro started off in a way that told the scout that
earnest, that he had certainly got his bearings
familiar scene before him.

up a rapid pace, Buffalo Bill keeping close by

is loomed up nearer and nearer, and at last
nd the negro were almost under their shadow.
Bill."

e dat break yonder in de cliffs?"

canyon, sah."

back from where you see de open place, sah,
ig springs yonder dat flow down the canyon,
har dey found de gold."

ro went forward alone, and began to climb
ep rocks to the break in the cliff. Watching

him, Buffalo Bill saw him peep cautiously over, as
though he expected to see an enemy beyond.

A moment he remained thus, and then came a distant
report of a rifle that echoed and re-echoed among the
cliffs, and Buffalo Bill saw the negro sink down upon
his face as though dead.

Buffalo Bill was fairly startled at what he beheld.

He had not thought of danger there to himself or to
the negro.

The shot had come so unexpectedly that, for a mo-
ment, he did not know where to look for an enemy.

It appeared to have ended the life of the guide, for he
had fallen in heap and lay motionless like a dead man.

But the scout was not one to hesitate long when action
was needed, or to allow a crime to go unpunished when
he could bring the perpetrators to book.

Thoughts went like lightning through his mind.

He thought of the people of Lost Valley that the negro
had risked so much to rescue.

Could they have killed their rescuer?

How far was the Lost Valley from where he then was?

Of course it must be those from the valley who had
fired on the black giant.

But who they were he must know, and where they
were, as well as why that murderous shot had been sent
at a rescuer.

Bounding forward while these thoughts were raging
through his brain, the scout reached a large rock at the
base of the cliff.

As he did so, a man sprang in view through the break
of the cliff, and within a few feet of the form of the
negro.

He was a large man, heavily bearded, long-haired,
and he held a rifle in his hand.

With a wave of his hand to some one unseen, he
called out:

"Come, Tom; for I told you I was right. It's ther
giant nigger of the Valley."

Buffalo Bill heard the voice answer afar off, but did
not catch what was said; yet he heard the reply of the
man in full view of him, for he replied to the other:

"Yes, dead as ther devil. I chipped him atween ther
eyes. Come along."

The scout remained behind the boulder.

He could afford to wait; for he knew that another
eneny was near, and would soon be in sight.

The one in sight had fired on the negro, knowing who
he was and being anxious to kill him.

He had spoken, too, of the valley; so he must know
where that was.

His words told Buffalo Bill that Black Bill was dead,
and, in the very moment of his success in bringing him

to the rescue of people who, if these two were a specimen of them, did not deserve rescue.

"I think I've got the best of this," muttered Buffalo Bill, and, slinging his rifle at his back, he drew a revolver in each hand.

"Ho, Rocks, yer got him," Buffalo Bill heard, for he dared not look toward the speaker for fear of being seen.

"It's ther nigger, hain't it?" asked the man who had fired the shot.

"Sure."

"How'd he get out?"

"Who knows; fer I thought he'd give up tryin' long ago."

"He didn't, though, if he's here."

"No, he didn't; but there can't be any more of 'em out."

"You bet ther hain't, and they won't be no more; so we've got it our way, sure."

"We has, ef our two pards comes back all right."

"They'll git here, fer gold will fetch 'em, you bet."

"Then we'll be rich for our nat'r'l lives."

"We will; and hev something ter leave after death."

"We played to win, and we got ther game; only I don't like this nigger gettin' out."

"Me, nuther."

"More might be gettin' out now."

"Not ef they're comin' ther way he did; for that hain't many men kin do it that I'm acquainted with."

"No me; but I wishes our two pards would git back with the horses, for it's after time some weeks, and provisions is running low."

"Yes, and gold won't buy food in this country."

"No; all we has got won't git us a meal if we was starving."

"That's so; but suppose we keep a eye on ther valley, for if we sees more of 'em gittin' out, it means death ter us, if we don't fust kill them."

"It does, but we'll do ther killin', as has just been done in this case of ther nigger; but let's drag him down inter ther soft ground, go through his pockets, and see what he's with to us outside of the killin', and then he kin be left for coyotes ter chaw on, fer it's too much like work ter plant him."

With this the two men took hold of the negro, and their oaths revealed to Buffalo Bill that they were dragging him along down the steep hillside, and found it no easy task.

Nearer and nearer they came, and the scout moved to the side of the rock nearest to which they must pass.

A moment more and they came within ten feet of him, and would have come full upon him, when suddenly they were confronted by a tall form and heard the words:

"Hands up, both of you!"

CHAPTER XVI.

FACE TO FACE WITH ENEMIES.

The sudden appearance of the chief of the b before them, appearing like an apparition men, who had no thought of danger near, ca to cry out in mingled terror and utter surpris

The form of the negro, which they were h half dragging along, was dropped with a sud was by no means showing a proper respect fo

The two men stood for an instant like s before them towered the tall, athletic form t Bill.

He held a revolver in each hand, and w from them.

"Hands up, I said!"

The men had not heeded the first comman from utter helplessness, in their amazement.

Now they did heed, and quickly.

Buffalo Bill stepped forward toward the him, unbuckled his belt, thus disarming him and revolvers, and then drew the strap of h his head.

"Now, your turn, sir!"

The man did not move.

"Step here, quick, or I'll reach you with

The scout saw that the men had discovere were two to one, and were plotting resistance

But the hint of reaching for him with a bu the man quickly to within the length of arm.

He, too, was disarmed of his belt of weap rifle.

"Now, I wish to tie you, and if I see the of funny business, you will hand in your chia

The men made no resistance, but they w toward each other furtively, and certainly w to escape.

"Lie flat on your faces, both of you, a hands behind your back!" came the order.

"I'll tie 'em, Massa Buf'ler Bill."

The words fairly startled the scout, with nerve.

It was as though a dead man was speakin

The two men uttered a yell of fright, an aiment, seemed about to risk bullets in the faki stitious fear.

Had it been night time, the added dread t brings to the superstitious would have sea on the jump.

"Why, Black Bill, I thought that youj and, thank Heaven, it is not so," said o earnestly.

ssa; it was a close call, for dat bullet done ter my head, and I guesses will kill me yet. ful dizzy in my head like, but I kin tie dese ll right."

the negro passed his hand across his head, lariat from over his shoulder, and began to tie n, Buffalo Bill keeping them covered with his nd aiding in binding them securely.

le lariat will do for them both, and keep them er—there now we have them; but you cannot

it seem as though I could, sir," and the black g on the ground.

to your wound right off." is the scout placed the weapons on the eeled the prisoners face to face, and bound with his own lariat.

Black Bill," and he began to examine the

in the center of the forehead; but, having upward, the bullet had glanced on the frontal along under the scalp for several inches, and its way out, leaving a long gash, not serious, shock of the blow had felled the black and im unconscious for some minutes.

the wound with water from his canteen, and up with a bandage moistened with arnica, the

are all right now, and the dizzy feeling will off."

"hurt, sah; but it do feel like a mule hed

what you want, and we'll go to the camp of gentlemen, for it cannot be far away."

had stood watching the every movement of and talking in whispers to each other.

ain't got no camp," said one.

ure, men. You sought to kill this negro pard ud that he escaped death is a marvel. I heard ou said, and I know that you have a camp ou came from the camp of those who settled in

so, Massa Bill, fer I knows 'em both, one ned Tom Vail and t'other they calls Rocks.

two pards, and we all thought dey got kilt de arthquake." I knows 'em, sah; but why dey

akill me I doesn't know, fer I never did 'em no

I den I thought dey was dead, and felt sorry

but dere must be two more of 'em, sah, so look na Bill."

here are two more of them, though they are

just now, but are due. I know a little about

ows myself, for they gave themselves away

when the thought they had killed you. Come, lead the way to your camp, or I'll find a way to make you, and which you will not like."

The scout had unwound his lariat, so that they could walk side by side, and the two men saw that there was no nonsense to be put up with on their part, so one said:

"We has a leetle camp down the valley, if yer wants ter go there."

"Lead the way. Black Bill, I'll help you," and, supporting the negro with his arm, Buffalo Bill followed on behind the two men, as they shuffled along down the valley, the weapons of each man being hung about their necks so that they would have to carry them.

The two prisoners walked slowly, partly because their legs were tied so as to prevent rapid traveling, and also because they did not wish to go.

They were livid with rage and fear, with hate and anxiety, for they did not know what would be their fate, while they saw their hopes dashed to earth in a second of time.

Down the valley they went for a mile, perhyps, the walk seeming to benefit the negro, and, at last, they turned into a small canyon in which grew a grove of pines, and at the head of which was a spring.

"De canyon whar de people hunt fer gold not far from here, Massa Bill," said the negro, and then he added:

"I jist guesses dat's what dese men is here for, while t'others is in ther Lost Valley, for something had been de matter, sartin."

The camp now came into view, a stoutly built log cabin, with door and shutters of hewn timber, and a shed along the front.

It was near the spring, was sheltered by the overhanging cliffs and the pines, and, winter or summer, was a safe and comfortable retreat.

"De people built de cabin, Massa Bill; put it up fer dere provisions, which dey kept here, ter keep from going back to de valley, sah, every night, and dey only all went on Sundays."

"So you did find your camp, eh?" said Buffalo Bill to the two men, and he made them fast to a tree, back to back.

Then he spread the negro's blanket for him, upon the pine straw, and said:

"Now, you lie down there, while I reconnoitre, this camp, which is a very snug affair, I see."

The two prisoners muttered oaths, the black lay down at full length, and Buffalo Bill threw open the door of the cabin and the shutters, which gave light within.

It was a large cabin, and there were a number of bunks in it along the rear wall.

There were shelves, too, with provisions, and a table,

cooking utensils, weapons and picks, shovels, axes and hatchets.

A haunch of venison hung under the shed outside, with bacon, hams, and dried fish, showing that the men were still well supplied with provisions.

In a plot of ground back of the cabin there were potatoes, cabbages and turnips growing, and places to store them away for the winter.

"You fellows have had the best, I see, and I am going to know about you before I am done with you," said Buffalo Bill.

Then he added that he would cook dinner for all hands, and draw on the cabin's larder for his supplies.

A fire was smouldering outside of the cabin, and this was replenished, and soon a dinner of roast potatoes, bacon, venison, hoecake and coffee was prepared.

Black Bill was asleep; but woke at the scout's call, saying that he felt much better, save for a headache.

"It is well it is no worse. Now, see what a good dinner we have; or, I may say, supper, for it is getting late. I guess we'll camp here to-night and return to our camp to-morrow; or I will go and bring the boys here, for you must keep quiet for a few days."

"What is you doing here in the Big Horn country, anyhow?" said Rocks, as Buffalo Bill untied the hands of the prisoners for them to eat their dinner.

"That is just what I came here to ask you, and, as a Government officer, I have the call."

"The nigger calls you Buffalo Bill."

"Yes."

"Is you him?"

"Yes."

"I has heerd of yer," said Rocks, watching the scout with interest.

"So has I," Tom Vail added.

"You may hear of me before I leave this country of the Big Horn."

"Did ther nigger bring you here?"

"About that."

"What for?"

Buffalo Bill was willing to be questioned.

He might find out what Black Bill had so far not made known to him.

So he answered:

"You know this country belongs to the Indians, and the Government wishes to protect them in it, and will not send troops here, unless compelled to do so to punish murdering redskins."

"You men, and others like you, are aware that the Big Horn is rich with gold finds, care nothing for the Government's pledges to the Indians, and invade the mountains and valleys as gold boomers."

"This keeps the Indians restless, revengeful and hos-

tile, causing them to kill bands of whites, raid settlements away from their lands, and call on the military to punish them severely for what the boomers have driven them to do."

"You are, therefore, law breakers, and murderers, for you kill the Indians, and they are the gold boomers and many innocent whites."

"Now, I know that there is a settlement, though they may have done no harm to them, they are still law breakers, and must leave the country."

"You'll have a lively time getting the lost Valley out of this country, Buffalo Bill."

"It may be; but they must go," was the rejoinder of the chief of scouts.

CHAPTER XVII.

A DISCOVERY.

Buffalo Bill would have liked to have re-ut own camp that night, but he saw that Blath still somewhat dazed by the wound in his right hand did not just know how it would turn out.

The scout had known similar wounds when least expected, and if the negro was here, the two prisoners he might lapse into unconsciousness and there be a possibility of the men getting away.

Then, too, he knew what had been said to men of the pards they were expecting.

They were over-due and might never come again, if they did happen to come that way, would mean sure death to Black Bill, should they find him there alone.

So the scout decided to remain, and, after the sun was over, he secured the prisoners, left the charge, and started out on a search.

He was not long in finding a trail leading down a canyon, through which flowed a stream, likely wet weather, but at other times dry.

Going down this, the scout saw that he had come into the goldbeds of the people of the Lost Valley.

It was a case of placer mining, the wash mountains of the particles of gold, and yet the shovel had been brought into use also in the same canyon.

"They have gotten considerable gold out of this, it is certain, and these men have been steadily at work; but where are the people of the Lost Valley? only these two murderous scamps seem to be about."

So musing, Buffalo Bill went on through the wash, came out into a large valley, and, climbing to a lofty cliff, looked about, glass in hand.

It was nearly sunset; and the rays of light

s, ate valley, and the eyes of the scout fell upon
"Weects there.

He turned his glass upon them.
"We are horsemen!" he cried.

"They are coming this way."

Then after he continued:

"There are two of them, but they are leading five
to

"They are! I believe they are the pards of these two
men just returning.

"Black Bill, lucky I did not return to my camp.

"They must be their two comrades; and, if these
orderers, they can be no better than are coming.
They are all of half a dozen miles away, and it will
take a half before they can reach the cabin,
and then we will be in soon.

"And prepare for them."

Rebut took another long look at the far-distant
Bluff then descended from the cliff, walked rapidly
up the gold canyon, and reached the cabin
sk fell.

"Is I am sorry to have to gag you, and make you
here, but I am determined to be upon the safe
con

"I am well enough, Black Bill, to help me?"

"Sah, sah."

"Get two sticks, put a piece of blanket over the
er each, and have it so you can tie it back of their
v,

"I'd tie these men in their bunks, when they have
ed and they will give us no trouble or anxiety."
"I'll kill us," shouted Rocks.

"Thou; you don't die so easily."

Two men, bound as they were, sought to resist,
ng soon found that they were as children in the
ikdie scout, and they were placed in their bunks,
it there, and the gags put in their mouths so
ad could utter no sound.

At this the scout gave each one a severe pinch,
as they cry out, but a low groan was all that they
ther.

"I see, I discovered some visitors coming, and who
are the pards of these two men coming for
we wish no outcries of alarm, for I shall cap-
lyn also."

"Two men could hear, if they could not talk, and
bothed and moaned at what they heard.

"Black Bill, hide in the pines, rifle in hand, and
y to drop those men if they attempt to run
t

"Sah; I'll do it."

"He a short distance off in the pines. Are you

"Yes, sah."

"All right. I'll wait in the cabin to welcome them."

The negro shouldered his rifle and walked to a place
of hiding, with the scout by his side.

Then Buffalo Bill returned to the cabin and closed the
door, to await the arrival of the visitors.

That the chief of scouts had made no mistake in his
surmise as to who the two horsemen were was proven by
the sound of hoofs coming up the canyon.

The guide saw by the moonlight two men, with five
led horses, two carrying packs, pass by him.

He heard one say:

"I'll be sartin afore I make a break, for we don't
know what has happened in ther three months we has
been away."

"All right; I'll wait here," was the answer.

The first speaker then rode on alone to the cabin and
called out:

"Ho, pards, kin yer give a couple of friends lodgin'
fer ther night?"

The two prisoners writhed in agony of spirit, but
Buffalo Bill, imitating the voice of Rocks, and having
learned the names of the two men, called out:

"Hooray! Is that you, Jim Sims and Alex Sands?"

"It are. Any one with you?"

"Yes; two pards is here. Wait until I open the door,
and you bet we is glad ter see yer, fer Tom is laid up
just now and feelin' mighty bad."

"Hoop-la! Come on, Alex!" cried Jim Sims in a joy-
ful tone.

"They are here, and all's O. K., with the goose hang-
ing high."

The tone was exultant, and Jim Sims leaped from his
horse, stepped to the door, and was suddenly seized by
the throat with a grip of iron, hurled to the dirt floor
and heard the words:

"Utter a sound of warning to your pard and you are
a dead man!"

The man was silent with fright, and, in an instant,
the lariat of Buffalo Bill had been passed round and
round his arms, pinioning them to his body, while his
weapons had been removed.

"Come in, Alex, and see poor Tom," said Buffalo
Bill, and the other man, having dismounted, stepped
into the cabin, to be felled his full length by a stunning
blow dealt him by Buffalo Bill full in the face.

"Ho, Black Bill!" called out the scout, and the negro
sprang into the cabin at the call, having followed the
last man closely.

The latter found himself bound before he recovered
from the scout's stunning blow full in the face, but he
gasped:

"Who is yer, cuss yer?"

"A Government officer on the track of gold boomers, four of whom we have just roped in, for there lie your pards Tom and Rocks, in as bad way as you are."

"Is this one all secure?"

"You bet he is, Massa Buf'ler Bill."

"Buffalo Bill! Great God! That means we hang, Jim Sims!" cried Alex Sands, in bitter tones.

"So you are Buffalo Bill, is yer?" asked Jim Sims.

"Yes; anything else I can do for you?" and the scout naturally felt elated over his successful capture without firing a shot or having taken a life.

"No, cuss yer, yer hev done too much."

"We'll take the gags out of those fellows' mouths now, as we have these two secure," and, going over to the bunks, the two gags were removed, water was handed the men, and the four were at liberty to talk together, as soon as all four were secured in bunks for the night.

Then Buffalo Bill and the negro went to care for the horses, and a good grass plot was found down the canyon, where the animals were staked out.

The two pack saddles were well filled with supplies, and two of the other horses had bridles and saddles on them for the use of the men who were to ride them back to civilization when the gold boomers returned with their riches.

From the conversation of the four, Buffalo Bill soon gleamed that the two had had a hard time of it going through on foot, but had reached Helena at last, and, after a long rest, had bought horses and supplies, and, watching their chance, had started back again for the Big Horn Basin for their pards, and, cheered by the riches they would become possessors of and going to bring back with them to civilization.

The firelight showed Buffalo Bill that the two men had hard faces, about on a par with his first two prisoners, and he knew that it would not do to leave them alone, bound as they were, with Black Bill, until the negro felt wholly himself again, and so he said:

"Now, we will turn in, Black Bill, and get a good night's rest, and to-morrow I'll go after the boys and bring them over here, for this seems to be about the end of our trail."

CHAPTER XVIII.

A LIVING TOMB.

When morning dawned, the scout and the giant black were on their feet.

The latter said that he was all right, only his head was sore and felt twice as heavy as usual.

The prisoners were taken out of the bunks in the cabin and tied to trees near the outside fire, where breakfast was put on by the negro, while the scout went to

lead the horses to water and to change the grazing ground.

This was accomplished by the time breakfast done, and, as the chief came up prisoners talking earnestly with the black out:

"Massa Bill, what you think dese bad g me to do just now?"

"Kill me, I suppose, and set them free."

"Lordy, Massa Bill, you read minds san a book."

"It does not require much mind-reading they offered you big money to turn against B

"That's just what they did do, sah; offe a half de gold dey have got ter set 'em free kill you."

"They didn't know you, Black Bill. e r blame them, for killing is their trade, abil ally wish to go free. Come, men, and we'll g fast," said the scout, with no show of re ward his prisoners.

The meal over with, Buffalo Bill decide once for the scout's camp, leaving Black Bill the four prisoners, who were greatly cast s failure to bribe the negro to allow them to which they could only do by putting the chit way.

They had, indeed, offered him half the g re had, and said he could accompany them on m

That the guide would prove false to him did not for a moment believe, and he call j and said:

"Last night I would not leave yott alone fellows, black pard, for I was not just suf head of yours would pan out after that I feared they might best you."

"But now you are all right, and I will go after the boys."

"You keep your eyes upon these men, fo tricky as snakes, and bound as they are, t you one, and they may find some way of get of you should you be off your guard for a m

So saying, he shouldered his rifle, and st the scout's camp.

He had not gone very far before he s approaching.

At a glance he recognized Sergeant Buck a

They saw him about the same time, and g of joy.

"We are after you, chief, for, as you di an appearance last night we got anxious ab

"Where's the black giant?" called out Se

it by a miracle only, for he got a wound that close call."

"the rocks, sir, I suppose."

"was shot."

Buffalo Bill told of the discovery so far made, capture of the gold boomers, and learning that were scattered in search of him, he said:

"turn, sergeant, and bring the outfit here, for I come one down the valley to meet you."

"boys do not come in until night, come to-mor-
en will go with me now, and see if we cannot
ger discoveries."

Buck at once set off on the return trail, and Ben went back down the valley.

Break in the cliff was reached Buffalo Bill led the steep hillside, and the two continued on e narrow pass.

Bill had an idea that he would make some dis-
I going through that pass that severed the re

drew near the further end, they could see
the opening that a large valley lay far below
ousand or more feet.

as had narrowed to less than a hundred feet,
on solid walls of rock far above them.

Within a short distance of the end, Buffalo Bill
denly and cried:

"ere, Scout Ben!"

end of the pass has been blasted out with

lls just what it was, Ben, and—we have found
he Lost Valley lies before us!" and Buffalo
ne rang like a trumpet through the pass.

uf of scouts, since his meeting with the black
ost used up by starvation and wounds, had
nd set on the penned up settlers in the Lost

given his pledge to the negro to answer the
im for aid, to go with him on what to other
have seemed an aimless trail.

pushed on against all dangers, all obstacles,
ention was to triumph.

efore him was the Lost Valley.

no wonder that a triumphant smile hovered
mouth of Buffalo Bill and his dark eyes
th joy.

come to the end of the long and perilous trail.
hey stood, beneath their feet, and all around
rocks were blackened with powder.

ad been a heavy blast there, as they could see.
t blast of powder had shattered the cliff, and
small mountain of rock down into the valley

It had broken off the edge of the cliff right at the end of the pass most abruptly.

Right beneath their feet the cliff broke off and went downward almost like an artificial wall for a thousand feet or more.

The two scouts advanced to the edge and their eyes became riveted in wonder at what they beheld.

Below them was a valley, or rather a basin, for it was surrounded on every side by towering cliffs. No break could be seen anywhere, no canyon pushing into the surrounding wall of rock.

It was not a valley surrounded by mountain ranges, but a valley completely encircled by cliffs rising one thousand feet.

A valley that seemed to have sunk downward into the earth.

But that was not all, for right in its center was a large lake, with wooded shores.

The valley was a mile in diameter at least.

And more, it was inhabited.

That was what the two scouts stood so intently observing.

Around the lake, in the timber, were scattered a score of cabins.

A herd of cattle, horses and mules were there, too.

A group of wagons were in one place.

Men, women and children were also visible.

The crowing of a rooster was heard down in the valley, and a flock of sheep was feeding right beneath the cliff on which the scouts were standing.

For a long time Buffalo Bill gazed through his field glass at the strange sight, and then without a word handed it to Scout Ben.

He, too, looked long and attentively, and when he removed the glasses from his eyes Buffalo Bill said:

"How to get down there is the question."

"There must be some way, sah."

"I can discover no break anywhere in the walls. We must start those people out pretty soon, for it will be slow traveling with a wagon train, and we must not be caught on the way. Come, we will go after Black Bill."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE RESCUE.

Black Bill, revolver in hand, lay on the pine straw, guarding his prisoners, who were tied to trees in front of him.

Neither the negro nor his prisoners heard the scout approaching, but the latter heard Rocks saying:

"See here, nigger, don't you be fool enough to think all four of us is goin' ter hang, and that one of us won't

git away, and that we will kill you sure as the sun shines if you don't let us go.

"That fool, Buffalo Bill, has gone off trustin' you, and our horses hain't far away, so we can all pack some provisions on, load up with gold, and be far away afore he comes back.

"As you say you are all on foot, ther scouts kin never catch us, and you'll git gold enough to last you all your days as a rich man."

"I'd ruther be a poor honest man than a rich one what had betrayed the gemman I owes my life to more than one time.

"You gemmen is as bad as you kin be, and I'm onter your whole game now, though them in the valley don't know it.

"When dey does, your necks won't be worth nothin', I is a-thinkin', gemmans."

"Good for you, black pard."

The negro sprang to his feet, and was face to face with Buffalo Bill and Ben.

The four prisoners scowled and muttered curses.

"Well, Black Bill, we have found your valley."

"Done found it, Massa Bill?"

"Yes, we went through the break in the cliff where you so nearly lost your life yesterday.

"I have sent to our camp after the boys; but it must have been a very hard and dangerous task, from what I have seen of the descent, to get that train down into that Sunken Valley, a very Devil's Den, I would call it."

"De pass led through and down de side of de cliff, sah. It were mighty dangerous fer wagons, sah, but all right for de people ter walk.

"Saturday nights dey all went down in de valley ober Sunday.

"One Saturday, Massa Bill, all went but four men—here dey is, right here now.

"Dey had been working on de cliff road, blastin' it out wid powder, for we brought our wagons along, with plenty of powder, sah.

"Jist at sunset dere came what we all thought was a arthquake or volcano, and de whole front of de cliff fell into de valley.

"Dere was rocks and fire and smoke go way up inter de air, and three people in de valley was kilt dead.

"When dey all got deir senses de next day, Sunday, dey came to de conclusion dat de four men, dese very

gemmens here, hab let de powder git on fire
de cliff and dem, too.

"But I now know dat dese gemmans h
cliff on purposse, sah, dat dey might git all
was found in de canyon and keep it.

"But, Massa Bill, dem poor people in q
same as in jail, for dey couldn't git out."

Buffalo Bill replied:

"You, Black Bill, are a hero, and as bra
a man as ever lived, be he white, black, y
skin.

"These four men did prepare that pow
blow off the edge of that cliff and keep the
the valley, which you call lost, and they
people as well."

Standing on the very edge of the prec
Bill began to watch the cliffsides with his g

"Try and make them see you, Black Bi
scout.

The negro fired his rifle, and gave a loud
Many faces were upturned at once, wom
ren were seen running here and there, and
arose as the negro was recognized.

The scene was a startling one, for the
valley were wild with joy.

Writing with a pencil upon several pages
book, Buffalo Bill put them in his handkercl
it around a large stone, and tossed it do
valley.

There was a wild rush for it at once.

"I told them that we were here, plannin
out of their valley.

"That I had noticed that the winding tr
face of the cliff had been blocked up wh
had fallen below, and also that it woul
reached by lariats from here, and we woul
to rescue them."

"You'll do it, Massa Bill, and I kin see
a few lariats tied together will reach de
der."

"We can blast the rocks out that fell an
the trail, and we can bring that whole out
valley, though it may take us a week, pe
to do so.

"I will write them what to do."

Another note was written and thrown do

nn Hill himself picked it up, and his voice on the cliff:

you, Buffalo Bill."

ll spare us some powder, we can blast this

another pass further along, which you can n to the trail."

begin work to-morrow, for all my men will," was shouted back in the clear tones of and a great cheer told him he had been pe filled every heart.

week the scouts slept in the valley, and nning all hands went to work repairing dress and shoeing the horses and mules, tions were made by the women for leaving ch had so long been to them a living tomb. eeks after the arrival of the scouts, the gun.

at a time was taken up the ledge trail; the children followed, then the extra horses cattle, sheep and all that could be carried

CHAPTER XX.

CONCLUSION.

from the Devil's Den, as Buffalo Bill oken Valley, was a long one and slow, with k and all on the move, for chasms had to be n miles a day was a fair rate of travel at

Il led the way by the spot where Don Mil been buried, and this was recovered. hod time Fort Aspen was reached.

ring the fort, Buffalo Bill appointed Don ide to the wagon train, and, with his black ured on a secret expedition.

of scouts had a certain object in view, and ich one of his men to share the honor with xpedition proved to be the success he hoped

Black Bill also went along, for he had be y shadow of Buffalo Bill, and was the hero band of black scouts.

of Buffalo Bill was to capture Ginger Sam,

whom he felt sure he would find at his cabin in winter quarters.

At night the cabin was reached and quietly surrounded, and at daylight, when the cabin door was opened by Ginger Sam, he looked squarely into the muzzle of Buffalo Bill's revolver.

Up went his hands and he said:

"Wa-al, you wins ther game."

"I will, when I play my last card, Ginger Sam."

"What are that?"

"A rope," was the significant reply.

"You don't intend ter hang me?"

"Yes, with four more of your kind I found in the Big Horn and whom Major Armes will make short work of, as he will you, and that will about clear this country of such cattle as you."

"I knew you were bad as they make 'em, but I have a friend who knows you to be a renegade and the secret instigator of half the Indian deviltry done here."

"I refer to Don Miller, whom the Indians captured, and understanding Sioux well, he asked about you, as he thought you might get them not to kill him, for once he had saved your life."

"But get your traps ready, for after breakfast we start for the fort."

The next afternoon Buffalo Bill, his black scouts and his prisoner reached Fort Aspen, and the welcome the garrison gave them, and also the rescued settlers, for they had arrived the day before, was enough to repay the men all the hardships they had endured.

"Another one to hang, Cody?"

"Well, he's a little late, for the other four were hanged this morning; but it is never too late to do a good act, and there has been a price on that man's head for a long time."

"Yes, the four wretches who proved such traitors to the settlers, I had tried at once, and they were quickly sentenced, and to-morrow this man's life shall end, for white outlaws must expect no mercy here."

"But, Cody; let me thank you for your splendid services in behalf of Fort Aspen and its garrison, and believe me, a full report of what you have done shall go to headquarters without delay."

So said Major Armes, the commandant of Fort Aspen, and soon from post to post along the border went the story of Buffalo Bill and his black scouts.

THE END.

Next week's issue (No. 10) will be entitled, "Buffalo Bill's Bravos; or, Trailing Through the Land of Death," by the author of "Buffalo Bill."

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